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LORE AND LEGEND OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

WORKS BY THE REV. GEO. S. TYACK, B.A.

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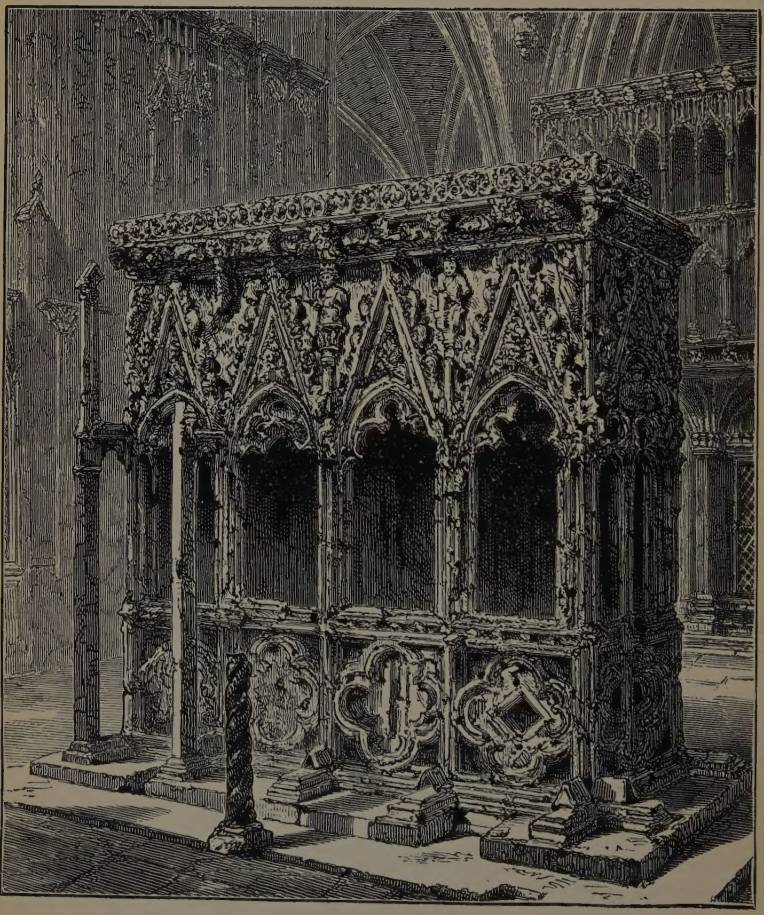

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Lore and Legend

of the English Church.

By the
Rev. Geo. S. Tyack, B.A.

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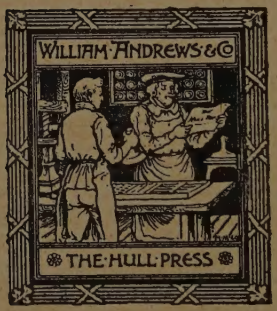


TO ONE

WHOSE UNFAILING INTEREST IN

ALL MY UNDERTAKINGS

IS TO ME NO SMALL ENCOURAGEMENT, AND

WHOSE CRITICISM AND ADVICE ARE NO LITTLE HELP,

MY WIFE,

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

Preface.

ENCOURAGED by the kindly reception that his former works have been accorded, the author of the following pages has once more ventured to make the attempt at presenting, in brief and popular form, some, at least, of the salient points of a large subject. Within the limits which he has set himself, he has aimed at making this examination of the Lore and Legends of the English Church as complete as possible; with what success he must leave it to the reader to judge. It is his pleasure, as well as a duty, once more to acknowledge the obligation under which he is to the excellent library of works on folk-lore and kindred subjects which his friend and publisher, Mr. William Andrews, of the Hull Press, has put at his service.

GEO. S. TYACK.

PENKRIDGE,

Easter, 1899.

Contents.

PAGE

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.—All Religions largely concerned with the Supernatural and the Mysterious, and these the fields most largely occupied by Folk-lore—The adoption of Pagan usages by the Church often harmless and even expedient—Evidence of S. Paul, S. Gregory, and the Catacombs—Folk-lore a growth, not an invention—The familiar affection of the people for the Church in past days—The ethical truth of legends historically untrue—S. Dunstan—Widespread interest of the Mediæval Church—Limitations proposed. 1

CHAPTER II. THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH.—Sites of heathen temples utilized for Christian Churches—The Empire and the temples—Circular Churchyards and their origin—Churches near Wells—Supernatural indication of sites—Durham Cathedral—Cartmel—Supernatural interference with building—Welsh, Cornish, and other examples—Pagan custom of human sacrifice at laying a foundation—Connection of this with the foregoing stories—Other suggested explanations—Legends of carvings, etc., on Churches—Satanic possession of Churches—Further proof in these of early contests between Paganism and Christianity—Form of Early Churches—Wooden Churches—Cruciform buildings—Circular buildings—Orientation—Methods of raising funds—Briefs—Destruction of Churches by fire—By encroachments of the sea—By drifts of sand—Services in partly ruined Churches—Twin Churches—Largest and smallest Churches—Curiously built Churches. 11

CHAPTER III. THE CHURCH STEEPLE.—Use of Steeples—The Devil's dislike to them—Steeples at Probus, Ashton-under-Lyne, Ormskirk, and Prestwich—Acrobats on Steeples—Curiosities preserved in Church Towers—Church clock superstitions—Hymns on Church Towers—Fortified Towers—Notable Towers and Spires. 43

CHAPTER IV. THE CHURCHYARD.—The Garth, *Atrium*, or "God's Acre"—Trees in Churchyards—Yews—Rose-trees—Churchyard grass—Ghosts—S. Mark's Eve—Hemp-seed charm—Churchyard charms—Divination and witchcraft—North side of the Churchyard—Funeral and Bridal processions—Wakes—Secular use of Churchyards—Clipping the Church—Church Ales—The Parish Stocks—Preaching Crosses—Doles distributed in Churchyards—A Dorset custom—S. Germoe's Chair—The Sun-dial. 52

PAGE

CHAPTER V. GRAVES AND FUNERALS.—Burials in Churchyards and in Churches—S. Swithin—The Orientation of graves—First interment in a new grave-yard—Animals and things buried with the dead—Funeral superstitions—Flowers at funerals—Use of coffins—Funeral garlands—Flowers on graves—All Souls' Day, Whit Sunday, and Flowering Sunday—The herse—Burial in Woollen—Attendance at funerals—Bearers—Torches—The Burial Service—A charm—Exhumation—Curious grave-stones—Epitaphs—"Edwin and Emma." 78

CHAPTER VI. THE NAVE.—The "Ship of the Church"—Rushes for a floor-covering—Rush-bearing—Seats—High pews—Bench-ends—A Cornish legend—Family pews—Hall-dog pews—Galleries—Separation of the Congregation according to the sexes—Wearing hats in Church—Dog-whippers—State attendance of Mayors and others—Secular uses of the Nave—Feasts—Paul's Walk—Standard land measures marked in Church—Curious incident at Wells—Public penances—Charms and spells—Sunday weather—Pictures and statues in Churches—The Royal Arms—Floral decorations—Quaint Christmas custom at Ripon—Trees in Churches. 101

CHAPTER VII. THE PULPIT AND THE LECTERN.—Origin of Pulpits and Lecterns—Movable Pulpits—Old Pulpits, their Sounding Boards, and Hour Glasses—"Three-deckers"—Laws for the provision of Pulpits in Churches—Laws ancient and modern as to Sermons—Homilies—Mediæval preaching—Latimer's Sermons—Curious methods of Preachers—Endowed Sermons—Bampton Lectures, Boyle Lectures, the Lion Sermon, the Fairchild Sermon—A Corpus Christi Sermon—Wedding Sermons—Funeral Sermons—Lecterns—Eagle Lecterns—The Bristol Eagle—The Pelican—The Caistor Gad-whip—The Litany-desk. 134

CHAPTER VIII. THE FONT.—Early Baptisteries and Fonts—Baptismal Churches—The material of Fonts—Their shape—Their decoration—Their inscriptions—Their covers and canopies—Their position—Basins used for Fonts—Hallowing the Font—Baptismal seasons—The Baptismal waters—Water from the Jordan and from Holy Wells—Superstition concerning a first Baptism—Decorating a Church for a Baptism—The Bearing-cloth—The Chrisom—Chrisom-children—Christening caps—Sponsors—Their qualifications and numbers—Superstitions concerning God-parents—The age for Baptism—Precedence of the sexes—Immersion, Aspersion, and "Sprinkling"—Crying at Christening—"The Devil's Door"—Superstitions concerning the child's name—Choice of names—Unction of the Baptized—The Sacrament to be free—Confirmation—

PAGE

The Bishop's left hand—The age for Confirmation—Sponsors at Confirmation—Unction at Confirmation—The linen fillets—*Volowing* and *Bishopping*. 154

CHAPTER IX. FOLK-LORE AND CUSTOMS OF MARRIAGE.—Banns—The words *Banns*, *Spurrings*, and *Sibrit*—"Falling over the Pulpit"—Superstitions concerning banns—"Mocking the Church"—Lawful and unlawful seasons for marriage—Lucky and unlucky days—Sunday Weddings—The bride's dress—Her hair—Her veil—Marriage in a sheet—Bridesmaids—The bride's mother—The "best man"—Flowers and rushes at Weddings—Marriage at the Church door—The Wedding-ring—Posies on rings—The ring-finger—Rush-rings—Puritan objections to the Wedding-ring—Superstitions about the ring—"Spousal offerings"—"I thee *Worship*"—The nuptial kiss—Curious Wedding customs—Wedding music. 178

CHAPTER X. THE CHANCEL AND THE CHOIR.—Primitive names for the Chancel—The Screen and Veils—Exclusion of the Laity—The Royal Prebend at S. David's—Primitive Chancels—Stalls—Misericordes—Decorations and lights—The Paschal candle—Candlemas—Flowers for S. Barnabas' Day—Ascension Day in Lichfield—Ball-playing by the Choristers—"Whip-dog Day"—Boy-Bishops—Antiphonal singing—Impressing Choristers—The Reformers on music—Carols—The Manx *Oie'l Verrey*—Hymns and Metrical Psalms—Parish Clerks—The Parish Orchestra—The Organ—The Altar—Charms connected with it—A modern omen—"Bible Orchard," S. Ives—Bowing towards the Altar—Altar-rails. 203

CHAPTER XI. ALMS AND OFFERINGS.—Alms in the Primitive Church—Lammas Day—Meaning of the word—Animal offerings in England—Banners and spoils of war—"Offering enemies"—Royal Epiphany and Maundy gifts—Alms in the Prayer-book—Offertory, meaning of the term—the Basin, Dish, Box, or Bag for the Alms—Charms with Church money—The "Sacrament Shilling"—Curious application of Church Alms—Patents and Briefs—Doles—Mortuaries—Gifts to Shrines—Thefts from Shrines—Relics still preserved in England. 230

CHAPTER XII. CONCLUSION.—Changed regard for Folk-lore in recent times—The myth-making tendency of Human Nature—Underlying meanings. 252

Lore and Legend of the English Church.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

IN the nature of things it needs must be that a multitude of customs, often quaint and curious, is found in connection with every society of great antiquity. The mere fact of such long-continued existence implies that the roots of the organization in question are laid in an age when men were simple-minded and credulous, when critical skill was little known, and when to unscientific eyes the common things of every day were so full of inexplicable wonders that the supernatural seemed ever very close to the natural.

But beyond all other societies it is to be expected that a wealth of folk-lore and legend should grow up around that divinely constituted society, the Church; and this for several reasons. The message of the Church is largely concerned with those subjects which are specially fruitful in fanciful speculations, with the affairs of that mysterious realm which lies near enough to us to attract our interest, and yet too far from us to allow of our investigation. The mysteries of life and death, the vast, unfathomable oceans of the Heretofore

and the Hereafter which meet about the narrow shores of Time Present, the influences which draw or drive us in our earthly course, and the connection between the character of the unknown future and the known, or partly known, present —these were neither new problems when the Church came as an authoritative teacher, nor had the sages and philosophers of old had any monopoly of speculation concerning them. It was not one of the priesthood, but a noble of the rude court of Edwin, King of Northumbria, that urged the common interest in these questions as a reason for listening to the words of S. Paulinus. "The present life of man on earth seems to me," so the Venerable Bede records him as saying, "in comparison with that time which is unknown to us, like the swift flight of a sparrow through the hall, as it enters by one door, and immediately flies out at another, what time you are sitting at supper, O King, with your chieftains and attendants about you, on a winter's night, while within a fire blazes on the hearth and the room glows with the warmth, and without storms of wintry rain and snow are everywhere raging: for the time that the bird is indoors it is unassailed by the tempest, but in the briefest of intervals, as it came from the winter's darkness, it is lost to our sight and returns to the winter's darkness again: so the life of man appears for a space, but of what follows, or of what went before, we know nothing."

Similarly had many a thoughtful man reasoned with himself; the problems of life and death, no less than the experience of them, occur in some sort to every man; and consequently every religion strives to peer into the surrounding mists, to learn somewhat for the guidance of its disciples here, and to encourage a hope for the hereafter.

Christianity came then with a new message on a subject as old as the world, and one on which countless speculations were rife in the minds of men. And it was but to be expected that even believers in the new and clearer teaching should not be able, nor entirely willing, to shake off altogether the fancies in which they had before comforted themselves. Hence we find in all times and places tales of ghosts and apparitions, of witchcraft and Satanic agency, of fairies and goblins,—which are all evidences of the efforts of the human mind to realize something of the invisible world around him ; and hence, too, the theories concerning days, things, and actions which are lucky or unlucky, concerning charms and amulets, talismans and signs,—which are crude attempts to explain some of the mysteries of Providence. The spread of education is rapidly relegating many of these things to the limbo of extinct superstitions, but to several of them we may apply the dictum of Dr. Johnson on the subject of ghosts ; "it is wonderful that five thousand years have now elapsed since the creation of the world, and still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of the spirit of any person appearing after death ; all argument is against it, but all belief is for it." So scientific culture has shown itself as powerless as religious teaching to seriously affect the native credulity of men in some respects.

But not every habit or custom in use before the foundation of the Church, even if it formed part of an idolatrous worship, was in itself superstitious. "The heathen in his blindness" might offer to the idol, which to him symbolized the debased and unworthy conception which he had formed of Deity, many an act of devotion

which might laudably be rendered to the true God; and thus many usages of heathen times were adopted by the Church and endowed with a Christian meaning. The Apostle S. Paul illustrates the spirit in which this was done, when with ready wit he obtains for himself a hearing from the sceptics and gossips of the Areopagus, by claiming for the Faith the altar to "the Unknown God." A more distinct example of this method of treating heathenism meets us in a letter from Pope Gregory the Great to the Abbot Mileto, written in 601. "The idol temples are not to be destroyed," says the pontiff, "but let the idols in them be destroyed; let holy water be blessed and sprinkled in these temples, let altars be built and relics placed there; and since they are accustomed to slay many oxen in sacrifice to demons, let them on the anniversary of the dedication, or on the birthdays of the holy martyrs, construct booths around those churches which were formerly temples, and celebrate the solemnity with religious festivity." It has also been well observed that in the primitive Church, a great many of the converts to which were slaves, it must often have been a matter almost of necessity to utilize heathen festivals for Christian purposes; the freedom from the usual round of labours affording the little flock an opportunity too valuable to be neglected. Similarly the earliest Christian art was largely an adaptation of such heathen symbols as might be converted readily to the teaching of the truth. The trailing vine painted along the wall, or the simple figure of a shepherd bearing a lamb, spoke to the worshipper in the Catacombs of the declarations of the Saviour, "I am the true Vine," "I am the Good Shepherd;" yet to the heathen they were also familiar as

suggestive of far different ideas. Thus does the Commendatore de Rossi speak of this subject, in his *Roma Sotterranea;* "I have constantly observed in the subterranean cemeteries, that the early Christians possessed sculptured sarcophagi which bear no sign of Christian faith, and seem to have issued from Gentile workshops; adorned with images of the firmament, scenes of shepherd life, agriculture, the chase, games, etc. The Christian interpretation given to agricultural or pastoral scenes, to personifications of the seasons, to dolphins and other marine creatures, is obvious and universally acknowledged. When the faithful could not obtain sarcophagi adorned with sacred sculpture, it is evident that they took great trouble in selecting those which contained nothing directly offensive to the faith, and did not represent idolatrous rites, images of false gods, or subjects too evidently belonging to Pagan theogony."

What it was thus found necessary, or at least advisable, to do in matters of public festivals and in the use of art, would be still more naturally done in those countless smaller usages, which, connected only very indirectly with a specific form of faith or religion, had become part of man's mental habit towards those mysterious questions of which we have above spoken. And how tenaciously some details of the old faiths were clung to, by those who had nevertheless embraced the new, is exhibited in a striking manner in several passages in the *Acts of the Apostles*, and in the *Epistles* of S. Paul; where we find that even the leaders and rulers of the infant Church were still in several cases strenuous in upholding the whole of the details of the Mosaic economy. What we find there, doubtless took place all the world over in different forms and various degrees.

It would be an error, however, to suppose that all the folk-lore of the Church, all the "superstitions," if you will, that the people have brought into it, or cultivated around it, are of heathen derivation. Every age produces its manners and customs, obvious enough in meaning and practical in purpose to itself, but quaint and curious survivals, or half-forgotten fragments of antiquity, to its successors. Even we in these closing years of the nineteenth century, when the tendency seems to be to eliminate the play of fancy, and to curb originality or idiosyncracy, so as to bring all to one monotonous level of life and action,—even we shall probably be found by a future age to have evolved habits of thought and conduct, which will then appear as grotesque as those of past days not seldom do to us. Would that we might hope that our legacy of folk-lore will prove as full of lessons of tenderness and truth as in many cases our heritage has been. For it should not be forgotten that the chief interest of folk-lore is in the fact that it is a genuine growth from the convictions of the people; the quaint custom, the weird legend, the venerable superstition, are not valuable only from an antiquarian point of view, but as necessary data for a true history of man, setting forth, as they do, his inmost faith, in those points to which he has clung most tenaciously.

The existence of the Deity, and under Him of supernatural powers both good and evil; the immortality of the soul; the value of propitiatory sacrifice,—these are some of the elementary articles in the creed of men, to which the folk-lore of almost all ages and races bears witness. The folk-lore of the English Church shows us also, by customs that at first appear antagonistic in their sharp contrasts, the

familiar affection, yet the profound veneration, which were felt for the Church herself and for all things consecrated to her service. Her sacramental system and apostolic ministry, her sacred vessels and solemn seasons, the consecrated enclosure around her fanes, the very stones from their walls, and sods of their garths, all were regarded as specially blessed: yet withal the villagers held their wakes within the churchyards, and chatted and chaffered even within the naves of the churches, saw mountebanks climb their steeples, and watched the performance of miracle plays in consecrated buildings; without seeing anything incongruous in their conduct.

Each fact in the almost boundless folk-lore of the country, however trivial or childish it may in itself appear, is the outward expression of a deep feeling once common among the people. Even those legends of bygone days, which it is the fashion to discuss as tissues of romantic superstition, have their meaning and their foundation. No one deliberately invented the legends of the people, any more than anyone artificially created their customs; such an attempt would have been utterly futile, for the creations would in either case have been entirely devoid of vitality. Ruskin in one of his minor works emphasizes the fact that there is a poetical truth as well as an historical truth, and that many a legend which is not history may be the vivid expression of an ethical fact. But we may go further, and aver that in almost all, if not in all, cases, the legends, like the customs, have arisen from the solid foundation of an historical fact. To take what may seem an extreme instance; of all the ecclesiastical legends of our land, which one has been more often treated as a merely ludicrous and absurd myth than

that of the contest of S. Dunstan, the archbishop, with the arch-fiend? And yet there is surely a most natural method of explaining how such a strange story arose. The great archbishop, as is well known, was a master in the mechanical arts, and loved the fierce flame of his forge: what then more natural than for him to assert, or for it to be asserted of him, that when he was assailed by temptation, and especially sensual temptation, he fought the devil with his hammer and his tongs: meaning thereby that at such times, with practical good sense, he flung all his energies into the hard manual labour of his forge, and so drove off the attack of the evil one? And what, again, more likely than that such a statement should grow in the imagination of a simple age into the story of the devil, in the form of a beautiful woman, tempting the saint and being repelled by his glowing tongs? In some such manner, doubtless, have most of our legends and folk-lore tales been built up, enshrining a truth sometimes poetically, sometimes (as here) more quaintly, yet having ever that truth within them, which has been the life-giving and sustaining force to them during the ages.

Another point which helps to account for the multiplicity and variety of our Church folk-lore is the fact that in past days the offices of the Church entered so fully into the lives of the people. That religion has not its share now in the every-day life of many, and especially in all the important events and crisis of their career, it would be wrong to assume: but it certainly is true that no public evidence of the fact is given now to the extent that it was of old. Then the annual wake or fair began with the observance of the dedication festival of the parish church; each trade, organized into a company or fraternity, began its yearly feast by atten-

dance at mass, and in many cases maintained its own altar in the church, and paid its own chaplain; and one of the most joyous days in the year was the one on which, with song and merriment, the whole parish helped to gather rushes to strew the church floor, and brought them home. In days, too, when there was little of movement from place to place, and most men died within sight of the spot where they had been born; when moreover no one yet had separated himself from the Mother Church of the land, the parish church and all that pertained to it were necessarily more to the people generally than they are now. At its font everyone had been baptized, before its altar every man and wife had plighted their troth, around its grey walls all the forefathers of the living generation slept their long sleep, and thither all felt they would themselves be borne when their time came. Amidst all "the changes and chances of this mortal life," the birth and death of men, the growth and fall of the green woodlands, the times of peace and the passage across the acres of grim war, the one thing that stood unchanged in the memory of all, from the cradle to the grave, was the great grey church; the one voice that was never hushed in death, the constant tolling and pealing of her sonorous bells. What wonder then that affection and imagination joined with faith and history to weave a many-coloured web of mingled fact and fancy around those time-worn walls?

In a field so wide as the folk-lore of the English Church, it becomes necessary to make a selection of subjects, if one's treatment of it is neither to be inconveniently bulky, nor disappointingly general. For all that affects the life and death of man, and all that deals with supernatural powers and the unseen world, might reasonably be included within

its scope. In the following pages, therefore, an endeavour will be made to keep rigidly within the limits of a narrow interpretation of our title. Only such folk-lore and legends as concern the fabric of the Church, its precincts, and its services will be reviewed. The funeral train has no interest for us until it arrives at the lych-gate, the wedding party leaves our sight when it leaves the churchyard; but all that happens within the limits of those walls, so far as it has given rise to customs quaint or curious, or to charms and superstitions that are noteworthy, all this we will consider the legitimate subject of our present discussion.

CHAPTER II.

The Building of the Church.

FOR how many ages the sites occupied by some of our churches have been esteemed by the people as holy ground, it would be hard to conjecture. The parish priest who is able to say that his parish possessed a church when Domesday Book was compiled, feels a certain natural pride in the guardianship of so ancient a foundation; yet it is unquestionable that in many instances the spot was regarded with veneration for ages before that date, in fact long before S. Joseph of Arimathea could have set foot, according to tradition, in the island, and reared his little sanctuary of interwoven branches at Glastonbury.

Not a few of our oldest churches occupy the sites of heathen temples. In the first days of the triumph of Christianity over Paganism in Europe, the natural tendency was to destroy, not only the idols, but the buildings also, which their presence and their often impure rites had polluted. Thus under Constantine and Valentinian many temples were totally demolished. In the time of Theodosius, however, another and more sober plan was adopted; and the idolatrous shrines, purified from falsehood and dedicated to the truth, became Christian churches; and an edict of Honorius (408 A.D.) definitely forbade the destruction of any more temples, at least in the cities, on the ground that they could be turned to public use when their Pagan

decorations had been removed. A writer of the middle of the fifth century, Prosper the Aquitanian, asserts that this emperor gave over the temples and their precincts to the Church. Instructions for the adaptation of such places to Christian purposes were quoted in the last chapter, as given by S. Gregory the Great in the beginning of the seventh century; and there can be little question that the practice then recommended was adopted so far as opportunity served. S. Paul's Cathedral is alleged to cover and consecrate ground once occupied by a temple dedicated to Diana, and it is highly probable that a similar conversion has taken place in many of the towns which were at one time Roman settlements. But there are facts which are supposed to take us back to faiths extant in Britain even before Cæsar and his legions invaded its shores.

There are, for instance, in Wales a number of churches dating for the most part from the Norman period of architecture, which stand in churchyards circular or oval in shape. Such are the churches of Llanfechain and Kerry, in Montgomeryshire, of Llanarmon and Cilcenin, in Carnarvonshire, Tremeirchion in Flintshire, and in Denbighshire, Derwen, Efenechtyd, Cerrig-y-druidion, Bettws-Gwerfil-Goch, Llan-Elidan, and Llandyrnog. The remarkable fact concerning these churchyards is not merely that their form is singular, but that they are usually environed by a road, for which there is no obvious public requirement. It is, moreover, well known that the Celtic inhabitants of this island affected a circular form for their sacred enclosures, a fact that is illustrated by circles of ponderous stones in many places. The best known instance of these is at Stonehenge, and the memory of them is still kept alive by some of the

Druidic ceremonies with which a modern Eisteddfod is inaugurated. The common situation of these temples of the Celtic Pagans, consisting of "stone pillars in one or two circular rows," was "the centre of some thick grove or wood, watered by a consecrated river or fountain, and surrounded by a ditch or mound, to prevent the intrusion of improper persons."*

Putting these items of evidence together, we must admit that it is at least a reasonable theory which sees in these circular churchyards, girded by a public way, wherein Christian rites have now been celebrated for many hundreds of years, an indication of holy grounds of untold antiquity, within which it may be that for thousands of years the Pagan worship flourished. In this case we must suppose that the Church, having won to her side the majority of the people, set up her altar within the enclosure which, in their minds, had already long enjoyed a sacred character; and the road, which now so aimlessly surrounds the churchyard, marks the ancient rampart which separated it from common ground, or (as at Efenechtyd) the ancient bed of the stream which served the same purpose.†

Another mark, or probable mark, of the annexation of the holy places of heathenism by the Church is the neighbourhood of a well or spring. The reverence felt of old for such natural objects is well known. Milton's intimate knowledge of classical usages transfers to the Severn a custom common enough in Italy, in the familiar lines of his "Comus":—

* "The Religion of Ancient Britain," by Geo. Smith, LL.D., F.A.S. (Longmans, 1846.), p. 40.

† See an article on this subject by the Rev. E. Owen, M.A., F.S.A., in "Antiquities and Curiosities of the Church." (Andrews & Co., 1897.)

> "The shepherds at their festivals
> Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
> And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
> Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils."

But, indeed, the worship of clear, cool water, whether in still pool or in rippling stream, was not peculiar to any mythology, and was practised in all parts of the world. Italy had her feasts of *fontinalia*, and Derbyshire and Staffordshire delighted in their well-dressing, ages before the custom became allied to Christian festivals. The naiads, nymphs of river, lake, and fountain, were endowed by their votaries with oracular and prophetic powers; and were propitiated with offerings of milk, oil, and honey, and the sacrifice of lambs. Borlase, in his "Natural History of Cornwall," speaking of the miraculous efficacy ascribed to some waters, says, "The Castalian fountain, and many others among the Grecians, were supposed to be of a prophetic nature; by dipping a fair mirror into a well the Patræans of Greece received, as they supposed, some notice of ensuing sickness or health, from the various forms portrayed upon the surface; in Laconia they cast into a pool sacred to Juno cakes of bread-corn; if they sunk, good was portended, if they swam, something dreadful was to ensue." The same authority says, that "The Druids (as we have reason to think) pretended to predict future events from holy wells and running streams." We have already seen, in a quotation given above, that these latter chose for the erection of their sacred circles spots watered by streams and fountains; and there are wells in the country whose names still testify to the regard in which our Saxon forefathers held them; for we still possess, besides the many

wells dedicated to Christian saints, a Woden's well and a Thor's well. There are in England some hundreds of wells that are reputed to this day to be "holy," the county of York alone containing nearly seventy; and we may safely conclude not only that all these obtained their sacred character at a very remote period, but that they are the survivals of a belief at one time more widely spread.

Recollecting these facts, therefore, it is interesting to find several of our most ancient churches standing in close proximity to wells. At East Dereham there is a well in the churchyard, at the west end of the church; at Bisley, in Gloucestershire, is the ruin of a churchyard cross which covers a well, now dry. About two hundred yards from the church of S. Tecla, Virgin and Martyr, at Llandegla in Wales, is a spring now named after the saint; at Jesmond, near Newcastle-on-Tyne, a well and a chapel formerly stood in close connection; at Lichfield are similarly found the church and well of S. Chad; in Somersetshire, the church of S. Decuman at Watchet claims to have stood hard by the holy well since the year 400; in Shropshire, we have the parish church of Stoke S. Milborough (Milburga) close to a well of the same dedication; S. Cuthbert's well is near Donington Church, and the monastic houses of Wenlock Priory and of the friary at Ludlow both include wells of reputed sanctity within their walls.

Scotland supplies examples in the well and the ruined chapel of S. Laurence, at Little Dunkeld, Perthshire, another at Musselburgh, and that of S. Fillan, at Strathfillan.

From all these instances it seems almost impossible to escape the conclusion that the early Christian teachers, taking advantage of the sacredness which they found already

ascribed to wells and springs, in many cases erected their first rude churches by the side of them. It is true that water was, and is, required in the services of the Church; its proximity would be convenient for the administration of Holy Baptism, and in the primitive ages it was usual for the worshippers to wash their hands, ere entering the church, at a fountain or basin provided in the outer courts. Eusebius, Paulinus of Nola, and Socrates the historian, all speak of the provision of such a means of lustration; and S. Chrysostom and Tertullian refer to its use. But even if this practice were known in Britain, it does not destroy, but rather confirms, our contention. The presence of water, so readily to hand for these purposes, would be an added reason for occupying the site which Paganism, on account of that presence, had held to be holy.

The sites of some churches have been, according to legend, miraculously assigned to them. Everyone who is familiar with the north country knows the story of the foundation of Durham's glorious cathedral. In the days when Norse pirates were harrying our eastern coasts, the monks of Lindisfarne were compelled to seek refuge on the main land, and, exhuming the relics of S. Cuthbert as their most precious treasure, they carried them with them. For some years they found no permanent resting-place, but wandered over Northumbria, halting now here, now there. For some time Chester-le-Street gave them shelter; but the storm that had driven them inland was now felt far beyond the coasts, and they fled again, this time to Ripon. At last they essayed to make their way back once more to Chester-le-Street with the hope of being allowed to settle there, and they had journeyed as far as "a place called Ward Law," east of the site of Dur-

ham, when they were checked by a new and strange difficulty: the bier of S. Cuthbert stuck fast, and not all their combined skill and force availed to stir it. Perceiving that this was the result of no ordinary cause, the little company fasted and prayed for the space of three days, that the divine purpose might be revealed to them; and their devotion was rewarded by the revelation that they were to carry their holy burden to Dunholme. But this caused only further perplexity, for no one knew where Dunholme lay, or in what direction to seek for it. While they were thus wondering what was to be done, they heard a woman in the distance crying to a neighbour that she had lost her cow, and asking whether she had by chance seen it; the answer was that the cow had strayed to Dunholme, and that there it would be found. Full of gratitude for the sign, the monks endeavour to follow the woman, and at once the bier moves on without further difficulty; and their unconscious guide leads them to that spot amid the windings of the Wear, which the towers of Durham and the holy shrine of S. Cuthbert have since made famous. Such is the story told in the "Rites of Durham," and for ages it has been commemorated on the external face of the north-west pinnacle of the Nine Altars Chapel of the cathedral by the carving of a woman and a cow.

Supernatural intimation was given also of the site for Cartmel Church in Lancashire. A company of monks had journeyed into the country, and had selected a certain hill within Cartmel Forest as a suitable spot for a settlement. They had already marked out the ground which their church was to occupy, when a Voice, speaking to them out of illimitable space, said "Not here, but in a valley between

two rivers, whereof the one runs north and the other south!" Much the brethren marvelled where such a spot could be; but obedient to the command, they left their chosen place and set forth to seek the one appointed. After much fruitless search they came upon a wooded valley, in the midst of which was a morass, from which a sluggish stream flowed northward; wading through this they found that the marsh was bounded on the further side by a similar stream which wended its way to the south; while midway between them was a small eminence forming an island among the silent, sullen waters. Here, therefore, they reared their church, and dedicated it in the name of S. Mary; while on that hill top where the wondrous Voice had spoken to them they raised a small chapel in honour of S. Bernard, whence the spot is still called Bernard's Mount.

We of to-day, whose chief difficulty in erecting a church is raising the funds to pay for it, have no idea of the manifold difficulties with which our forefathers had to contend, even in the preliminary stages of their work. Spirits, sometimes good, sometimes evil, put forth their powers to interfere with the building, the site selected being frequently objected to for some reason by these invisible agents. Stories illustrating this are found scattered throughout all parts of Great Britain; sometimes in a form not unlike that which has just been quoted concerning Cartmel. In these, one site having been chosen, an intimation is conveyed to the workers, by a voice or in some other mysterious way, that another will prove more suitable, or more acceptable to God. Other legends are of a much wilder kind, and tell of the forcible removal of partly-built churches by fairies, devils, witches, or by unseen hands,

or by spirits in the forms of various animals. There is a great similarity between many of these tales, so that a few examples will be amply sufficient.

Of legends of the first of these two classes the following are specimens. Masons were at one time employed on a church which was to be built where the Cynwyd Bridge crosses the River Dee, but a warning was conveyed to them that the proper site for it was one at which a white stag would be started while they were hunting. In due course the omen was fulfilled; and there a church was erected, and was known as Llan-garw-gwyn, or "the Church of the white stag," a name since abbreviated into Llangar. Another Welsh legend tells how a voice cried continually to the builders of a church at a place now called Glanfread-fawr,

"Llanfihangel Geneu'r Glyn,
Glanfread-fawr gaiff fod fan hyn."

that is

"Llanfihangel Geneu'r Glyn,
Glanfread-fawr shall stand herein."

This was taken as an intimation that the church (Llanfihangel) should be built at Geneu'r Glyn, a farm occupying the spot originally selected. At Wrexham, too, we are told that the site at first chosen for the church was Bryn-y-Hynnon, but that a spirit-voice disturbed the builders by ever crying over them "Bryn-y-Grog!" (Hill of the Cross), until they transferred their labours thither, and built where now Wrexham Church stands. Cornwall has a similar legend of Talland Church. A place called Pulpit, nearer the centre of the parish, had been selected for building upon, but here, too, a mysterious cry was heard night after night,

"If you will my wish fulfil,
Build the church on Talland Hill."

And at length in obedience to this direction the place indicated, which lies near the sea, was adopted. In these last instances, the warning of the voice was supplemented and emphasised by the nightly destruction by unseen hands of each day's work.

At Hanchurch and at Walsall, in Staffordshire, the original site interfered in some way with the doings of the fairies; and consequently these little folk persistently removed the materials, until finally the merely human builders were forced to yield to their will. The fairies, too, are credited by some (though others say, spirits) with carrying off the stones of Llanllechia Church, near Bangor, from a field named Cae'r Capel. The more malevolent influence of witches is alleged to have been employed for the same purpose at Wendover, Buckinghamshire; though here also some versions of the story speak again of fairies.

At Breedon, Leicestershire, the church stands upon a hill, which overlooks the village, the ascent to it being so steep that the footpath is in some places cut into steps, while the carriage road is compelled to take a most circuitous course. The explanation of the use of this most inconvenient position, is that doves carried hither by night all that the workmen could construct by day on a spot situated in the midst of the village. The agent of the removal at Leyland, Lancashire, is alleged to have been a cat; at Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, "a phantom in the shape of a sow's head;" and at Winwick a pig. In this last instance we must acquit the animal from the charge of being merely a satanic manifestation, as in some other cases is suggested, since it

was to do honour to S. Oswald, the martyr king of Northumbria, that it persisted in conveying the stones to the exact site of the martyrdom. Several Cornish churches were moved from one spot to another during their erection by the Devil himself, who was helped in the work at Altarnon, in that county, by a hare and a deer. The materials for the chapel of S. Chad, Rochdale, were conveyed by unseen hands from the chosen site to a neighbouring hill top; Capel Garmon Church, which was to have been reared upon a hill and near an ancient spring, was removed in a similar fashion to a lower position; and Corwen Church was pulled down repeatedly, until the builders submitted to its erection beside the "Pointed stone in the icy nook" (Carreg y Big yn y fach rewlyd). The Devil carried the stones with which Worfield Church, in Shropshire, was building on a hill, down to a lower site; and in the same county we meet with stories of how two milk-white oxen, by the nightly destruction of the work, compelled the masons to place Broughton Church in the valley, of how Baschurch Church would have been upon Berth Hill but for similar uncanny interference, and how the position of the old church of Stoke-upon-Tern was determined in a like manner.

Stories of the same kind are told of the churches of Plympton S. Mary, of Brent Tor, and of Braunton, in Devonshire, of Waldron, Udimore, and Alfriston, in Sussex, and of many other places. The site which was finally occupied in the last-named instance was indicated by four oxen asleep in a meadow, and so lying that their bodies formed a cross.

Two legends of a far more fearsome kind reach us from

Ireland and Scotland respectively. The first tells how S. Patrick was endeavouring to erect a church on a great rock at Cashel, but that every night a bull of terrible size, from whose nostrils fire flashed, charged at his walls and entirely demolished them; and the opposition was only ended by Usheen, the disciple of the saint, dropping on to the back of the bull from a tree under which it rushed, and tearing it into two by its horns! In proof of which story the figure of Usheen astride the bull was, so it is said, carved within the church.

Yet more ghastly is the Scottish tale, which recounts how S. Columba received supernatural information that his walls at Iona could not be prevented from falling as fast as they were built, except by burying a human victim in their foundation; and how Oran, the saint's companion, offered himself, or was chosen by lot, for the purpose. The legend cannot be accepted as historical.

There is abundant evidence that it was a superstition in Pagan England that stability could only be assured in a new building by offering a sacrifice at its foundation; and the idea seems to be one of those which are common to man in a state of barbarism. In modern times, instances have been quoted from Africa, Borneo, and New Zealand, where human or animal sacrifice has taken place on such an occasion, or where at least the tradition of it survives as a usage but recently in vogue. It has, therefore, been argued with plausibility that in most of these stories, especially those in which the agency of animals occurs, we have a vague reminiscence of a similar belief; human sacrifice having been the service demanded in the most savage times, and animal-life being the substituted offering of later days,

which were yet not fully emancipated from their Pagan practices.*

Other theories, however, have been propounded to account for some of these curious stories, which occur with such remarkable frequency not only in all parts of Great Britain, but also in other lands. It will have been noted that in several instances one of the two sites between which the contest is waged is a hill top, as for example at Breedon, Rochdale, Capel Garmon, and in all the Shropshire instances. Bearing in mind the sacred rites which fire-worshipping inhabitants of these islands performed upon such spots, it has been conjectured that in these curious legends we have a record of a similar process to that already alluded to, in the occupation of the holy places of Paganism by the Church; these traditions having for their historical foundation the struggles that took place between the adherents of the new faith and those of the old, ere, in some cases at least, that occupation could be made good.

A far more prosaic explanation seems obvious in some instances. When we are told, for example, that the owner of the site on which the church is built was unwilling to sell it, until convinced of his duty by the story of the miraculous indication concerning it, it is not difficult to understand how the story arose. In other cases the opposition of a landowner, or the dislike of the people, to an inconvenient site, may well have been overcome by one of these tales of wonder. It is notable that Llanllechid is almost the only church occurring in these legends in which

* See an interesting article, "Some Traditions and Superstitions connected with Buildings," by G. L. Gomme, in *The Antiquary* for January, 1881 (Vol. iii., p. 3).

the final situation was more convenient than the earlier one.

On the tower of Winwick Church the story of its erection is kept alive (as is that of the indication of the site at Durham) by a carving; above the western door is the figure of a pig, with the following "dog-Latin" verses,

> "Hic locus, Oswalde, quondam placuit tibi valde,
> Northanhumbrorum fueras Rex, nuncque polorum
> Regna tenes, loco passus Marcelde vocato,"

which, turned into English of the same stamp, run thus—

> "O Oswald, lately this place pleased thee greatly;
> King of Northumbrians, thou above the heavens now
> Dost live and reign, though at Marcelde slain."

One is not surprised to find that the malice of the evil powers was not vanquished by their defeat, nor appeased by their victory, in the contest concerning the site of a church. At Rudston, Yorkshire, for instance, the Devil made a desperate effort to destroy the building, and the evidence remains to this day. Within the churchyard stands a monolith, some twenty-four feet in height above the ground, and supposed to reach to an equal depth below, the weight being computed at about forty tons. This, the local legend alleges, was flung at the church by his Satanic majesty; but luckily in this, as in other somewhat similar cases, his malice and his might were not equalled by his accuracy as a marksman, and the huge missile fell short by a few yards. It is suggested that we have here another example of the consecration to Christian usage of a spot held in reverence by the Pagans, for a tradition of the supernatural appears to have attached to this stone from remote antiquity, and the name of the village is alleged to mean

From a Photo by) *(W. Fisher, Filey.*

RUDSTON CHURCH AND MONOLITH.

"the famous stone," from the Scandinavian "hrodr-steinn." Legends of this type are more common on the Continent than with us: throughout northern Germany and Scandinavia, a story similar to the one above is a usual method of explaining the presence of isolated rocks, but some giant or *troll*, and not the Devil, is the assailant of the church.

In curious opposition to the theory of the sanctity of holy ground—as illustrated by the rights of sanctuary, and in other ways—are a number of weird legends of the diabolical possession of certain churches. These stories meet us chiefly in Wales and in the Isle of Man, the traditions of both districts being often singularly wild and gruesome.

Within Cerrig-y-drudion Church once dwelt a malevolent spirit, which grinned so horribly from the windows at all who passed by, that even in the day-time all avoided the place. At last, on the advice of a "wise man," two famous oxen of great strength were procured, and the spirit was, after great efforts, secured and bound to a sledge drawn by them! Away rushed the team with the hideous load, ploughing the land deep as they went, and marking the very rocks with their hoofs; and at last oxen, sledge, and the madly struggling spirit plunged into a neighbouring lake, and disappeared for ever. Llanfor Church has a legend similar in several of its details, though the spirit in this appears to have been harmless and even fairly well-behaved. It took the form of a gentleman in a cocked-hat; and by day made itself chiefly conspicuous by attending divine service, and standing throughout it. At night, however, he indulged in a blaze of light within the church, though if others came in, when it happened to be dark, to look for anything, the spirit blew their lights out. The ejection in this case was

managed in an orderly manner. Two persons skilled in such matters called upon the intruder, and informed him of their intention to come at a certain hour of night and convey him to a lake and "lay" him; and apparently no further trouble would have arisen, but that the two did not keep their appointment punctually. This nettled the cocked-hatted gentleman, and led to some opposition on his part; but finally he was got out, and in the form of a cock was carried on horse-back to the lake, and persuaded to jump in; and there he must remain until he has counted all the sand at the bottom of it. There are versions of this story varying in detail; in one, for instance, the spirit becomes not a cock, but a pig. A terrible struggle took place in Llandysilis Church between a spirit (who during his residence there had cracked some of the beams) and a man who sought to eject him. The final act is precisely the same as in the former stories; the spirit is drowned in a pool, but in this case on being overcome the enemy took the form of a huge fly. There is a Manx tale to the effect that a *Buggane*, an evil spirit, would not permit the completion of the church of S. Trinian; for as soon as the work was at the point of terminating, the fiend would fling the roof off amid yells of devilish laughter. Only once was an attempt made to withstand him, and then no practical result was attained beyond proving the temerity of one Master Timothy, a tailor. This local hero vowed that he would sit in the almost finished church and make a pair of breeches, before the fiend could again destroy the roof. Timothy worked with might and main, and refused to have his attention distracted, though the Buggane rose before him out of the ground, terrible in huge limbs and vast head

with wide and awful eyes. Just as the apparition had wholly revealed its size and form, the tailor put the last stitch to his work, and sprang from the building, and once more the roof fell with a crash. England is not entirely without stories of a somewhat parallel kind, though they are not so numerous. The tale of the "Roaring Bull o' Bagbury," in Shropshire, has many points of similarity to those told above. In this case, however, the objectionable occupant of the church was the restless soul of a certain farmer or "squire," who, in the form of a bull, so disturbed the neighbourhood that he was at last driven into the church at Hyssington, in order that he might the more easily be "laid." "Twelve parsons" assembled to lay him, and entered the church armed with candles. The bull in his rage blew out all the candles but one, and cracked the wall of the church, and the cracks may be seen to this day. At last, however, he was so over-powered that he was got into a snuff-box! And was thus laid in the Red Sea for a thousand years.

In these legends, some of which are almost childish in their wild marvels, any meaning is not at first obvious. But may we not see in them, especially in those of Welsh and Manx origin, the survival of ancient memories concerning the struggles between a new and an old faith? The conquest of Paganism by Christianity, and especially the acquisition of the holy places of the former by the latter, may, perhaps, be the kernel of historic truth thus strangely wrapped up in legend; but some have thought that a struggle and a conquest yet earlier, between rival forms of heathenism, have probably lived on in the recollection of the people, and now meet us in this weird guise. In any case a complete victory won by one party, and apparently a signal vengeance inflicted upon

the other, reminding one of the conclusion of Elijah's contest with the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel, seems to be not obscurely suggested.

The earliest churches of Christendom were probably oblong in figure, often with a semi-circular termination, or apse, eastwards; but when the faithful became rich enough, and had liberty allowed them, to build churches openly, and after such designs as they wished, different ground-plans were adopted, according to fancy or local custom. The "Apostolical Constitutions," a work dating probably from the fourth or fifth century, orders that "the building be long, with its head to the east, with its vestries on both sides at the east end, and so it will be like a ship; in the middle let the bishop's throne be placed, and on each side of him let the priesthood sit down." Yet the churches erected at Antioch by the Emperor Constantine, and at Nazianzum by the father of S. Gregory, were octagonal; the church of the Holy Sepulchre, founded by the same emperor, was circular; and at an early date cruciform churches were built in some places, as in the examples of the one dedicated to the Holy Apostles at Constantinople, and one built by S. Simeon Stylites, and described by Evagrius.

In England it is very evident that the earliest churches were humble structures, suitable to the means and the taste of a people but just emerging from barbarism. A simple parallelogram would doubtless be the form commonly chosen, with walls of timber and roof of thatch. In the quaint little church at Greenstead we have an example of such a building, which, so far as the major part of it is concerned, has probably weathered the storms of well-nigh nine centuries. It is only fair, however, to admit that

GREENSTEAD CHURCH, A.D. 1013 (AS IT APPEARED 1748).
Vestusta Monumenta.

in this case the structure was probably only meant originally as a chapel; there is ample evidences, however, of ecclesiastical erections of greater importance having been formed in much the same primitive fashion. The great abbey of Croyland was, as Ingulphus tells us, built originally of logs and planks; and such also was Malmesbury Abbey in the days of King Edgar, and Glastonbury in those of Canute. Finan, the successor of S. Aidan in the see of Lindisfarne, built himself a church on the island "of hewn oak covered with reeds;" and it was the strangeness of the sight of a church built of stone by S. Ninian that gained its name for Whitherne, or White House, in Galloway. Durham still had a wooden chapel of S. Aldhelm down to 998, and at Bury S. Edmunds one survived so late as 1303.*

S. Edward the Confessor is reputed to have introduced cruciform churches into England in the erection of Westminster Abbey; and that ground-plan has since been adopted for almost all our larger churches, and for many of the smaller ones. The legend, which has already been noticed, to the effect that four cows lying crosswise both indicated the site and suggested the form of the church at Alfriston, seems to point to a time when the cruciform design was not recognised as in any way a common one in the country.

A form more curious and less usual is the circular, of which several examples are to be found in England.

Allusion has already been made to the round church which was originally built over the alleged site of the Holy

* See the question of wooden churches, or stave-kirks, treated at some length by the author in "The Church Treasury of History, Custom, Folk-Lore, etc." (Andrews & Co., 1898.)

Sepulchre; and it is the memory of this venerable building which is perpetuated in our churches of a similar design. The Knights Templars in the Preceptories which they erected throughout Europe preserved the form of that sacred place which they had been specially enrolled to defend; and it is to them that we owe our round churches. In the Temple Church, in London, we have "the chief ecclesiastical edifice of the Knights Templars in Britain, and the most beautiful and perfect memorial of the Order now in existence." The rotunda was erected about the year 1185, the rest being added during the following century. S. Sepulchre's, Cambridge, is the oldest of the group of buildings of this type still surviving in England. The rotunda here is of Norman architecture, and to this a chancel was added about 1313. Northampton has another round church, also dedicated in the name of S. Sepulchre. The characteristic portion was built in the end of the eleventh century, and to this large additions were made at later times. The only other example, and the smallest, is at Little Maplestead, in Essex. This parish was granted to the Templars by the Lady Juliana de Burgo in 1186, and the buildings were probably commenced soon afterwards. The rotunda measures only thirty feet in diameter, and from this runs a chancel another thirty feet in length, but only fifteen in width. At the commencement of this century this interesting little church stood roofless and well-nigh ruined. It has since been repaired, but necessarily at the cost of much of the original work. A yet smaller round church stood at one time on the heights of Dover; its diameter being but twenty-five feet, and its chancel measuring twenty-seven by fourteen. Only the foundations now remain of this ancient edifice, in

which, tradition says, took place the conference between King John and the legate Pandulf. There are many Continental examples of churches of this kind, at Laon, Metz, Cologne, Trèves, Salamanca, Bologne, Rome, and elsewhere.

The custom of placing the chancel and altar at the east end of the church, though ancient and everywhere common, has scarcely anywhere been preserved so scrupulously as in England. A quotation given above from the "Apostolic Constitutions," proves its early use in the east, and observation only is needed to show its prevalence in the west. Yet Stephen, bishop of Tournay, in a letter to Lucius III., pope from 1181 to 1185, speaks of this orientation as a peculiarity at S. Benet's, Paris; and there are churches in Italy where the altar stands at the west end. An exception to what was certainly the primitive rule in England is exceedingly rare among churches of any antiquity. In more modern structures the nature of the only possible site in a crowded town, or the carelessness or ignorance of those responsible for the erection, have sometimes violated the ancient custom. Thus two small, and comparatively modern, churches in Lincolnshire are exceptions. At Well the altar stands at the west end, the entrance being at the east; at Eastville the church stands north and south, with the altar at the south. Probably the builder of the latter was not aware that S. Patrick had set him a precedent; yet the Apostle of the Irish, according to Jocelin, his biographer, erected a church in that manner at Sabul, near Down, in Ulster.

Though the orientation of our churches has been for the most part preserved, yet it is not an uncommon thing for them to vary several points from due east and west. There is a theory that the exact degree of inclination was deter-

mined by marking the spot on the horizon at which the sun rose, on the feast day of the saint in whose honour the church was to be dedicated. The theory is ingenious, and possibly has an amount of truth in it with regard to some instances; but it can hardly be counted as more than a theory.

There are many curious facts and stories in connection with the raising of funds for building churches in mediæval times. In a very large number of instances our parish churches were built at the sole charge of some wealthy and pious lord of the manor, or by some great monastic house; even in such vast structures as our cathedrals much was also done voluntarily, the monks being their own architects, sculptors, and masons in many cases. But in bygone times, as well as in modern ones, it was not always that the needful funds came readily to the hands of those who desired to build.

Any place which possessed an attraction for pilgrims was glad to turn that fact to account for the improvement of its church. It was the offerings at the shrine of S. Wilfrid which assisted in the completion of the Collegiate Church, now the Cathedral, of Ripon; and the east window at Rochester is the fruit of the alms-box beside the shrine of S. William of Perth; and these are but types of what went on throughout the country in those early days. Again it frequently happened that a gild or confraternity would undertake to build, or it may be to keep in repair, some portion of a church. Ludlow Church has an iron arrow affixed to the roof of the north chancel aisle, marking the fact that that portion of the church is the Fletchers' chancel, or chantry chapel of the gild of arrowsmiths. It is surely reasonable to suppose that the chapel thus marked with

their emblem was built wholly, or largely, at their expense. The local legend used to be (it seems to have died out now) that Robin Hood, standing on one of the tumuli hard by, which is still called by his name, aimed with his bow and arrow at the weathercock on the steeple; but that his arrow, missing the mark, stuck in the roof, where it is now to be seen. Even such a marksman as "bold Robin Hood" might be pardoned for inaccuracy of aim, had he to shoot with iron arrows. In the fourteenth century the young men of Yarmouth designed to build an aisle, the "Bachelors' Aisle," in addition to those already existing in their parish church, but the outbreak of the Black Death put a stop to their work. The inscription "Young Men and Maydens," which is cut twice on the fine tower of All Saints' Church, Derby, is supposed to commemorate the fact that the bachelors and the maidens of the town made themselves responsible for its erection up to that point.

Some carving on the west front of Bath Abbey is commemorative of a vision which led to the restoration of that building. Oliver King, on his translation, in 1495, from the see of Exeter to that of Bath and Wells, found the abbey in the latter city in absolute ruin. While meditating one night over this grievous state of things, he saw a vision like that of Jacob of old—a ladder up which the holy angels passed, while at the top glowed the presence of the Blessed Trinity. Beside the ladder a fair olive-tree spread its branches in support of a royal crown; and a voice seemed to say in his ear, "Let an Olive establish the crown, and a King restore the church." Encouraged by this divine intimation, he set manfully to work to rebuild the abbey in the year 1500; and although he did not live to see it

completed, he was able to do much; and on the western front he carved the ladder of his vision.

Another Somersetshire story of church building comes from Monksilver, and here, too, it wreathes itself around some carving in the church. In the heads of the windows in the south aisle are cut the figures of a hammer, a nail, a pair of pincers, and a horse-shoe; whereby, the villagers say, hangs this tale. Long years ago a worthy blacksmith in the place sent to Bristol for a hundredweight of iron, and in due time received a sack filled with metal. But when he opened it, it proved to be full of glistening gold! In thankfulness for this sudden wealth, he built this south aisle to his parish church, and commemorated in the carving the fact that it was a blacksmith's gift. The legend does not condescend to tell us what steps (if any) the worthy man took to find the true owner of the wealth; "finding is keeping" usually in folk-lore tales.

When a public appeal had to be made for funds, the usual method in past ages was by means of *briefs*. The word was applied originally to a form of pontifical letter issued by the pope, somewhat less solemn and weighty in character than a *bull*. It came latterly in England to be used of letters patent issued by the sovereign authorizing and recommending the collection of alms on behalf of a specified cause. It occurs in this sense in the office for the Holy Eucharist in the Prayer-book, where, after the Nicene Creed, there is a rubic which runs, "Then also (if occasion be) shall . . . Briefs, Citations, and Excommunications be read." The use of these authoritative documents was abolished by Act of Parliament (9 Geo. IV., c. 28) in 1828; but the name continued to be used loosely of circular

appeals for help in cases of emergency. Briefs, both in the legal and the popular sense, were often issued for the building and the repair of churches. In the parish of Witney, in the diocese of Oxford, the sum of 5s. 6½d. was thus collected in 1700 for Ely Cathedral, and in 1702 £1 1s. 7d. for Chester Cathedral. At Westmeon, Hampshire, 5s. 6d. was raised by a brief for All Saints' Church, Oxford, 4s. for Kentford Church, Suffolk, in 1715, and many other similar sums for churches in all parts of England; for briefs seem to have been used very freely in that parish, or perhaps a fuller record of them has been kept there than in the generality of cases. The parish of Hadstock, Essex, has also a long list of briefs, many of them on behalf of churches.

A glance at a list of these briefs as preserved in some of our parish records emphasizes most startlingly the dangers of fire in the last century, and the terrible havoc thus wrought in those days. The ground of appeal with painfully recurring frequency is damage, and often evidently extensive damage, by fire. It must be remembered that much timber was still used in building; there was little attempt at organized methods of coping with fire, except in London and some few of the large towns, and fire insurance was scarcely ever thought of.*

* Insurance against fire first became recognized as a business in 1667, the year after the Great Fire of London, though some gilds gave help to their members who had suffered loss in this way. Insurance was, however, used only to a limited extent down to quite recent times, one hindrance being the fact that the Government, in 1782, imposed an annual duty (in addition to the stamp) upon each insurance, which amounted at one time to 200 per cent. of the premium! It was not wholly abolished until 1869. The insurance of Church property is now compulsory.

The mention of the ravages wrought by fire upon churches brings us naturally to some legends and superstitions concerning their destruction; and, to go for a moment beyond the borders of the English Church, it may be pointed out that among the Danes the appearance of a raven, almost everywhere a bird of ill-omen, in a village is believed to foretell the death of the parish priest, or the burning-down of the church.

The Manx folk have a firm conviction that to use for secular purposes any place that has been dedicated to sacred usage bodes no good. To pasture one's sheep within the ground marked by a "Druidic" circle will probably bring disease to the flock, and there is no more withering curse than that carried in the words, "Clogh ny killagh ayns corneil dty hie mooar." (May a stone of the church be found in the corner of thy house.) A stone was taken from S. Luke's Chapel, in Baldwin, and carried to a farmhouse; but the whole family was kept awake by such supernatural sounds that it had to be removed. Someone accordingly placed it on the earthen fence of one of the fields, but the fence crumbled away beneath it. Finally it was taken back to the chapel, and all was well once more. In a house built on the site of an old Roman Catholic chapel on the south side of Douglas, the occupants heard nightly the tramp and shuffle of many feet, as of the arrival and departure of a congregation of people. In some parts of the country an idea prevails that it is unlucky, even for needful repairs or other justifiable cause, to have any hand in pulling down a church.

The fancy that where a church has been destroyed some signs of its existence may still be seen or heard, is of common occurrence. At Fisherty Brow, near Kirkby

Lonsdale, is a hollow where it is said a whole parish was once upon a time swallowed up, and where every Sunday the engulphed bells may yet be heard ringing. Crosmere Lake, Shropshire, covers an ancient chapel whose bells still ring whenever the waters are ruffled. But legends of this type are indeed legion.

On many points along the British coasts the sea has so far encroached that whole parishes with their churches now lie beneath the tide. At Kilgrimal, near Blackpool, legend says that a church has been devoured by the sea, but that on Christmas Eve its bells may still be heard joyously pealing. Nothing now remains above high-water mark of the greater part of the parish of Mablethorpe S. Peter, Lincolnshire. The Yorkshire coast has several similar instances. Burstall Priory was swept away by the Humber before Henry VIII. and his creatures looted and destroyed the monastic houses; the chapel of S. Mary at Ravenspur, about the year 1355, was overwhelmed; about 1450 S. Mary's, Withernsea, shared the same fate, and the church at Auburn was taken down in 1731 to avoid it. Within the present century the churches of Kilnsea, Out Newton, and Owthorne have all been undermined, and have crumbled and fallen into the sea; and the tide now ebbs and flows across their sites. The victorious ocean is marching on to achieve new conquests in the same districts; Tunstall, near Owthorne, is but 600 yards from the sea, though a century since it was separated from it by a distance of 924 yards. Aldborough Church contains a tablet taken from one erected by Ulf before the Conquest; Ulf's church has long been beneath the waves; and Aldborough, though still a mile and a half from them, sees them roll daily nearer.

Perhaps the most startling case of all is that of Dunwich, in Suffolk. Here we have a place, once a thriving seaport, the seat of the first East-Anglian bishopric, a town which contributed over a thousand marks to King Richard I., when Ipswich and Yarmouth were assessed only at two hundred each. But the advancing sea has destroyed most of the town, and left only the ruin of one church out of twelve which once rang out their bells across Southwold Bay. Again, yet further south, the Rev. Francis Green, vicar of Reculver from 1695 to 1716, wrote of his own parish, "The current tradition of the place is that the parish church stood about a mile into the sea, upon a place called by the inhabitants 'The Black Rock'"; and this tradition is confirmed by a record in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, to the effect that "On Saturday morning, January 3, 1784, there was a lower ebb tide all along the Kentish coast than has been known for many years. . . . At Reculver, the Black Rock (as it is called) being left dry, the foundations of the ancient parish church were discovered, which had not been seen for forty years before."

Everyone knows the story of the swallowing by the sea of the "Land of the Lyonnesse," the tract between Cornwall and the Scilly Isles. In that disaster legend avers that one hundred and forty parish churches were overwhelmed. In several cases Cornish churches, though not engulphed by the sea, have been buried in drifting sands. At Perranzabuloe is an ancient church, of which it was supposed that nothing but the memory survived, until in 1835 the shifting of the sands disclosed it once more. At Gwithian is another, which has fared somewhat similarly. Near Padstow stands the old church of S. Enodock, which the

sand-drifts have almost made their own. Being in a solitary situation it has been almost abandoned; but service is still said there once a year, although it is said the parish priest has before now been compelled to enter through a window, or by a hole in the roof, in order to conduct it.

There are other instances of the occasional use of ruined, or almost ruined, churches. In the early part of this century the carol-singers in one district of West Cornwall, after having made their round of the villages, met in the dilapidated baptistery of S. Levan and sang a number of carols. In connection with two wakes, held in the Abbey Foregate suburb of Shrewsbury, and known as the Cherry wakes and the Eel-pie wakes (from the dishes sacred to the occasions), service was sung, with the assistance of a string-band, in the ruined church of S. Giles. In 1836, however, the church was restored, and the divine offices ceased to be exceptional things there. Every Ascension Day used to be marked by a service in the chapel of Finchale Abbey, near Durham, which was performed by the clergy and choir of S. Oswald's in the city. Many are the sanctuaries throughout the land, mighty abbeys and wayside chapels, of which, unfortunately, the sacred character has been practically forgotten, and which have been perverted to base uses. But the field which this memory opens to us is too wide for us to enter upon here.

Before closing our chapter upon the folk-lore and legends which have grown up about the construction of our churches, a note or two upon a few buildings which are quaint or curious may be added.

The existence of twin churches—or two standing in one churchyard—has given rise to many fanciful stories. Of

this singular arrangement there are several examples in the Eastern counties. At Swaffham Prior, Cambridgeshire, we have S. Cyriac's and S. Mary's thus situated; at Trimley, Suffolk, are S. Mary's and S. Martin's; and there are instances in Norfolk. At Albrighton and Donington, in Shropshire, the parish churches are placed in the adjacent limits of their parishes, and are thus close together. The local story, in almost every case, is to the effect that the two buildings were erected in rivalry, the builders, curiously enough, being very frequently described as sisters. It is not improbable that in cases where two neighbouring barons divided a village between them, each may have built a church in some cases, neither being willing to give precedence to the other, or to accept the ministrations of his nominee.

The largest church in England—that is the one covering the greatest number of square yards—is York Minster, S. Paul's Cathedral coming second. The largest churches other than cathedrals are the abbeys of Beverley and Tewkesbury; but the largest parish church, which was built as such and not as a monastic church, is that of Yarmouth, Coventry being the next in size.*

To decide which is the smallest church in England is not quite so simple; but there are many that are as quaintly interesting for their diminutiveness as others are impressive by their vastness. The church which George Herbert served so well, at Bemerton, near Salisbury, seats but forty people; and Lullington, Sussex, holds not many more than

* A comparison of the area of these six churches, representing three classes of foundations, may be interesting to the reader; the figures in square feet are as follows: York, 63,800; S. Paul's, 59,700; Beverley, 29,600; Tewkesbury, 26,000; Yarmouth, 23,265; Coventry, 22,080.

CULBONE CHURCH.

its twenty-five parishioners. Bradford-on-Avon Church has a nave only twenty-four feet long by thirteen feet wide, with a chancel thirteen feet long by ten feet wide: this relic of past ages (it was built by S. Aldhem in 705) is not now used, but is carefully preserved. The churches of Culbone and Charlcombe, in Somersetshire, and Fenton, in Essex, each claims to be the smallest in England. The churches of Woldingham, Surrey; Stopham and Selham, Sussex; Coates, Lincolnshire; Farndish, Bedfordshire, and many others, will not contain a hundred people. Probably the smallest, as originally erected, was S. Laurence's Church, in the Isle of Wight; but it has been lengthened by fifteen feet, and now seats a congregation of 107. A late parish clerk has thus celebrated its proportions:—

"Its breadth, from side to side above the bench,
Is just eleven feet and half an inch;
Its height, from pavement to the ceiling mortar,
Eleven feet four inches and a quarter;
And its whole length from the east to the west end,—
I tell the truth, on which you may depend—
'Twas twenty-five feet, four inches, quarters three,
But now 'tis forty feet as you may see.
In eleven hundred and ninety-seven
'Twas built to show us the way to Heaven."

Amongst other churches in England which present, either by accident or design, peculiarities of construction, mention may be made of Abbey Dore, the chapel of the ancient abbey, which consists of the transepts, choir, and Lady Chapel only of the original building. Very similar is All Saints', Pontefract, which is now almost reduced to a condition of breadth without length, the transepts of a splendid church, which was wrecked during the Civil Wars, being all that is now used. Kilpeck Church is a curiously

elaborate structure for its size, its Norman doorways and arches being beautifully carved. S. Helen's, Abingdon, consisted until 1873 of five alleys of about equal breadth, and named respectively (commencing at the northern side) Jesus Aisle, Our Lady's, S. Helen's, Holy Cross, and S. Catherine's; the total breadth being greater than the length. At the restoration, in the year named, S. Helen's aisle was raised so as to allow of the insertion of clerestory windows, and thus the strange uniformity was lost. At Berwick-on-Tweed is one of the few churches—if indeed it be not the unique example—erected during the days of the Commonwealth, and this is perfectly original in its architecture. But, indeed, out of the thousands of our churches, great and small, ancient and modern, Classic and Gothic, there are very few which have not some features which make them interesting.

CHAPTER III.

The Church Steeple.

WHY do churches have steeples? The temples of no other faith are so adorned: the Greek and the Roman were content with the dignity of portico and colonnade; the Israelite fronted his temple only with the twin pillars, Jachin and Boaz; the Egyptian reared his obelisks, or formed his avenue of sphinxes; the Eastern religions build their pagodas—but none use tower or spire to glorify their fanes. The Mohammedan, it is true, adds minarets to his mosque, but Mohammedanism has gleaned from both Christianity and Judaism in forming its faith, and may well have used imitation in this respect also. The more the question is faced, the more evidently it appears to be connected with this other fact, that Christianity alone uses peals of bells. In other words, as the employment of large bells grew into use, so the need of some structure, strong enough to sustain their weight, and lofty enough to give full play to their voices, became evident. Thus even the architect designing a Christian church in the severest classical mode, was compelled to find room for an elevated belfry of some kind, as in the ingenious quasi-classical spires erected in such numbers and variety by Sir Christopher Wren. And it is worthy of notice in this connection that Christian sects which abandoned—or were forbidden—the use of bells, abandoned the building of steeples also.

It is true that the English Dissenters have taken in comparatively recent years to giving spires—generally meagre and half-hearted specimens, evidently not for use, and almost equally evidently not for ornament—to their places of worship; but these are confessedly imitations of the architecture of the Church.

If then we grant this to be the ground of the existence of our steeples, we are not surprised—recalling how deeply all evil spirits are known to hate the voices of the bells—to find that the Devil has endeavoured to prevent their erection, as we have seen he sometimes has done in the case of the church itself. At Towednack, Cornwall, the story goes that the Prince of Darkness never permitted the completion of the tower, but that he pertinaciously destroyed by night all that the industry of the masons could erect by day. At West Walton, Norfolk, his interference took another form; the tower was built, but the Devil carried it off; and there it now stands, at a distance from the church. In this instance it was, we are told, the wickedness of the Fenmen which gave the arch-enemy his power of obstruction.

But if demons hindered, saints sometimes helped, as is evidenced by the legend of Probus steeple. The church here was built by the saint from whom the parish takes its name; but the holy man, like others less marked by sanctity, was troubled by want of funds, and was at his wits' end for means to erect a tower. At last he begged the assistance of S. Grace, and through her the required sum was found, and the church finished. Then S. Probus, yielding to the temptation to pride, took to himself no small credit for the completed work, until he was reproved and humbled by a mysterious voice which sang through the air,

"S. Probus and Grace,
Not the first but the last."

The tower of Ashton-under-Lyne had several yards of its masonry built by a woman, who suddenly appeared among the workmen, and found them engaged in playing cards. She promised to do a portion of their labour for them if they succeeded in turning up an ace; and, luckily for them, the next card in the pack proved to be the ace of spades. In memory of this strange occurrence an ace of spades was carved upon the tower. Such is the story: it probably owes its origin to the fact that an escutcheon, not unlike the figure on the card named, was placed upon the tower, and was misunderstood by the local folk.

The church at Ormskirk has both a tower and a spire, a fact which is thus accounted for. Two maiden sisters of the name of Orm undertook the building, but quarrelled about the completion of it, one contending for a tower only, the other insisting upon having a spire. By way of compromise each built according to her fancy, so that the church got both. The probability is, it must be confessed, that the sisters Orm are a myth, and that the tower was erected to hold a full ring of bells, the earlier tower, which is capped by the spire, not being large enough for the purpose. The tower of Prestwich Church is adorned with a series of curious carvings; high up on the parapet, and mostly on the south side, are a number of quaint scenes, a goose defending her goslings from the attack of a fox, a swan floating amid her cygnets, musicians playing upon wind instruments, a man holding a muzzled dog, and angels carrying shields.

The elevated character of this portion of the church fabric has made it serviceable in several ways, not all of

them very admirable. There are several instances of the steeple having been used for acrobatic performances. In 1553 a Dutchman mounted the spire of old S. Paul's, and standing upon the apex waved a flag, for which he was paid £16; thereby illustrating a remark of Pilkington, bishop of Durham, in a sermon preached on "The burnynge of Paules Church in the yeare of our Lord 1561, and the iiii. day of June, by lyghtnynge"; "From the top of the spire," he says, "at coronations, or other solemn triumphs, some for vain glory used to throw themselves down by a rope, and so killed themselves vainly to please other men's eyes." At the reception of Philip of Spain in 1555, "a fellow came slipping upon a cord, as an arrow out of a bow, from Paul's steeple to the ground, and lighted with his head forward on a greate sort of feather bed." King George III., with his characteristic common-sense, dismissed a man who had tried to entertain him with a like stupid performance on Salisbury spire, with the remark, "As the father of my people, it is my duty to reward those who save life, and not those who risk human life." In 1732 a man named Cadman slid down a rope stretched from the top of All Saints', Derby, to the bottom of S. Michael's; he tried the feat at Shrewsbury in 1740, and was killed. Meanwhile another performer had appeared in Derby; in 1734 a man came down a rope from All Saints' tower to the bottom of S. Mary's Gate, drawing after him a wheel-barrow in which sat a lad of thirteen years of age. He next sent an ass down on the same aërial flight; but when the animal was some twenty yards from the end of its journey the rope broke at the top; people were overthrown by the falling ass, chimneys were brought down by the rope, and panic and

confusion were the result. No lives were lost, but there were no more acrobatic feats on All Saints' tower.

In 1600 a famous performer of the time named Banks, and his not less famous horse, Morocco, ascended to the top of S. Paul's steeple, and stood astride the vane. One other instance of a much earlier date, shows that the Church was roused to protest against these useless and dangerous exhibitions, at any rate when they ended fatally. In 1237 a man gave an acrobatic display on a rope stretched between the towers of Durham Cathedral, and fell and broke his neck. The Prior of the Abbey, who had the privilege of wearing the mitre, was censured and deprived of that distinction for countenancing the performance.

The existence of this practice shows how strong a tendency there has often been to treat the tower as scarcely an integral part of the sacred building; and the same fact is illustrated by the way in which it has often been used as a lumber room for all kinds of scarcely ecclesiastical properties. In the spire of S. Cuthbert's Church, Elsdon, was discovered a small chamber containing the skulls of three horses; but these have been held to have been something more than lumber; antiquaries seeing in them a relic of the cultus of the horse, of the existence of which in England there are several evidences. S. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, contains, or did contain, a more remarkable relic in the rib of a monster cow, which "once upon a time" supplied the whole city with milk. The rib, as a matter of fact, is a bone from a whale. The same tower contained the old chests in which Chatterton alleged that he found Rowley's poems; and in this S. Mary's is by no means alone, many a tower serving for the storage of old documents, of more or less interest.

The prominent position of the church tower was long since recognized as fitting it especially to hold a large clock for the convenience of all the parish; and around this accidental appendage to the church some superstitions have grown. In Veryan, Cornwall, for example, there is a tradition that, should the church clock strike the hour during the singing of the hymn preceding the sermon on Sunday morning, or before the third collect at evensong, there will be a death in the parish during the week. In Shropshire the death-token is given by the clock striking during the announcement of the text for the sermon on Sunday morning, or (especially at Baschurch) while the final hymn is singing. In some parts of Yorkshire, and probably elsewhere, it is regarded as singularly unlucky for the clock to strike while a wedding-party is in the church; and the present writer has known a bride and her friends, who lived immediately opposite the church, flatly decline to leave the house until the clock had struck, the wedding having been arranged for a quarter to the hour for the convenience of the priest, who had come some distance to officiate.

In more than one place in England the custom has arisen of holding a short service, usually consisting of hymns and anthems, on the top of the tower on some special anniversary. Pilkington, in the sermon quoted above, alludes to a similar usage in old S. Paul's; "at the battlements of the steeple sundry times were used their popish anthems to call upon their gods with torch and taper in the evenings." At the battle of Neville's Cross, October 17th, 1346, the monks of Durham ascended the great tower of their cathedral and watched eagerly the progress of the fight, chanting litanies the while; and when

at last victory declared itself on the side of the English, they broke into a joyful *Te Deum* as an act of thanksgiving. Every year in memory of that event the songs of praise rang out once more from the same place, until the Puritan supremacy under the Commonwealth put a stop to almost all signs of joy in church and out of it. At the Restoration the custom was revived, but the date was changed to the 29th May, and it continues on that day annually to the present time. Originally an anthem was sung on each side of the tower; but a chorister, having unhappily fallen on one occasion from the north side, that battlement has been avoided ever since. The custom of singing a hymn to the Holy Trinity on Magdalen Tower, Oxford, at sunrise on May Day, though in keeping with the feeling of bygone days, is not a very ancient usage. May it, however, continue until it has become so!

In the stormy days of long ago, when warfare often stalked across the land, the prominence of the church towers led to their being utilized very differently from the way last referred to. In many places, especially along the Scottish border and in the Welsh Marches, we find towers that have been fortified for defensive purposes. The tower of Great Salkeld Church, Cumberland, has only one entrance, namely, through the sacred building itself, and the door is iron-clad, and fitted on the inside with stout bars. Within this ecclesiastical keep the town armour was placed. In the same county we meet with other examples at Burgh-on-the-Sands and at Newton. Bedale, Middleham, and Melsonby, in Yorkshire, all have fortified towers, the first named having even a portcullis guarding its narrow stair.

The instances in which churches and their towers were

put to military use, without having been actually constructed with that incongruous object in view, are numerous; in fact during the great Civil War it seems to have been common. The troopers of the Parliament made temporary fortresses of the churches of Powderham and Ottery S. Mary; while the Royalists occupied those of Tiverton, S. Budeaux, and Townstall; these examples all occurring in the single county of Devon. The half-ruined condition of the old parish church of Pontefract is due to its use in the same way.

It would be tedious to give anything approaching to a full list of notable towers and spires in England. One or two notes upon the subject, however, will appropriately close this chapter. The central tower at York, built in 1260, claims to be the largest in the country, though to the eyes of some the Rood Tower at Lincoln is the most splendid. The Bell Harry Tower at Canterbury was once the "Angel Steeple," a great gilded angel gleaming out from its summit in the olden time to greet the pilgrims to S. Thomas's shrine. The spire of Salisbury, soaring in exquisite proportions 404 feet into the air, is one of the architectural gems of the country; nor should one forget the spire of Chichester, nor the triple spires of Lichfield, nor the splendid lantern tower of Ely. Among parish churches Boston claims pre-eminence for the height of its tower, and does not readily yield to another on the score of beauty; Taunton, Wrexham, Ludlow, and All Saints', Derby, possess splendid and massive towers; and the steeple of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, with its beautiful crown, compels the admiration of every beholder, even if he cannot quite subscribe to the enthusiastic words of a late vicar of the town (the Rev. Joseph Dacre), who, in 1804, declared

it to be, in his opinion, "the most beautiful in the world, which surpasses the cathedral of S. Sophia at Constantinople, the mosque of Sultan Saladin at Jerusalem, the church of S. Peter at Rome, even the temple of Minerva at Athens." Beautiful, too, is the spire at Louth, Lincolnshire; and Doncaster Church and that of Hedon, locally known as the "King of Holderness," have fine, massive towers.

Among steeples rather curious than fine, mention must of course be made of the "twisted spire" at Chesterfield. The tower of Cartmel Church, of which the upper section is placed diagonally within the lower one, is scarcely less quaint in its way, although less well known.

The rise of tower or spire respectively follows a fashion in certain districts. Throughout Lincolnshire, for example, towers are found almost exclusively in the old churches, except in the neighbourhood of Stamford, where spires prevail. Cornwall, again, is a county of towers, only a few ancient churches, such as S. Ewe in West Cornwall, having spires.

The chief part of the lore and legend of the church tower connects itself after all with a subject that has not been touched upon, namely, with the bells, but as the author has dealt with that somewhat fully elsewhere,* he makes no pretence of entering here upon so wide a field.

* "A Book About Bells," by the same author. (W. Andrews & Co., Hull and London, 1898.)

CHAPTER IV.

The Churchyard.

FROM the earliest times it was usual, when possible, to have a garth, or enclosed space, about a church, although it was not at first used for burials. Instances of interment within the sacred precincts occur in the fourth century, and by the sixth the practice had become common. Cuthbert, who ascended the primatial throne of Canterbury in 742, has been credited with introducing the use of churchyards as burial-places into England. One of the laws of Howel Dha, King of Wales in 943, prescribes the extent of such an enclosure: "The measure of a burial-ground is a lawful acre in length, the extremity of which shall touch the threshold (of the church), and surround it on every side." Such a limitation of the ground recalls the name referred to by Longfellow in the lines,—

> "I like that ancient Saxon phrase, which calls
> The burial-ground God's-Acre! It is just;
> It consecrates each grave within its walls,
> And breathes a benison o'er the sleeping dust."

The earliest English allusion to this hallowed spot is in the Excerptions of Egbert, Archbishop of York, issued about 740, where, under the name of *atrium*, it is mentioned as a garden near the church. The eighty-fifth canon, issued in 1603, provides for the protection of this ground, declaring it part of the duty of churchwardens to "take care

that the churchyards be well and sufficiently repaired, fenced, and maintained with walls, rails, or pales, as have been in each place accustomed."

The planting of churchyards with trees is a custom the origin of which has often been discussed, especially as certain trees appear to have been held, time out of mind, as specially sacred to such use. The yew is before all others the typical churchyard tree of England, and the possible reasons for its frequent appearance there are well summed up by White in his "Antiquities of Selborne," in a passage which is worth quoting at length.

"As to the use of these trees, possibly the more respectable parishioners were buried under their shade before the improper custom was introduced of burying within the body of the church, where the living are to assemble. Deborah, Rebekah's nurse (Gen. xxxv., 8), was buried under an oak; the most honourable place of interment probably next to the cave of Machpelah (Gen. xxiii., 9), which seems to have been appropriated to the remains of the patriarchal family alone. The farther use of the yew-trees might be as a screen to churches, by their thick foliage, from the violence of winds; perhaps also for the purpose of archery, the best long bows being made of that material; and we do not hear that they are planted in the churchyards of other parts of Europe, where long bows were not so much in use. They might also be placed as a shelter to the congregation assembling before the church doors were opened, and as an emblem of mortality by their funereal appearance. In the South of England every churchyard almost has its tree, and some two; but in the North, we understand, few are to be found. The idea

that the yew-tree afforded its branches instead of palms for the processions on Palm Sunday is a good one, and deserves attention."

The idea of protecting the fabric of the church by means of surrounding trees occurs in one of the decrees of the Synod of Exeter held in 1287, which runs:—"Since trees are often planted there (in the churchyard) to prevent the church from being injured by storms, we strictly forbid the rector to fell them; unless the chancel shall stand in need of repair, or unless, when the nave requires to be repaired, the rector, on account of the poverty of the parishioners, shall think proper, out of charity, to grant them some of the trees for that purpose." The law as to the right of the incumbent to fell timber in his freehold, the churchyard, is still the same as that here decreed for the western diocese.

There is evidence that the churchyard yews were sometimes used for making long bows, but it is by no means so certain that they were planted there for that purpose; although their growth there with that object was encouraged by Edward IV. about 1470; indeed, the fact that the trees in each churchyard were never numerous, while the number of bows required at the time when the long bow was the national weapon must have been very large, coupled with this other fact that the best wood for bows came from abroad, seems fatal to the theory. The yew, however, was unquestionably the usual wood for the manufacture of bows, and to this, and to the poisonous nature of the leaves, Shakespeare alludes when he makes Scroop say ("King Richard II.," Act iii., 2)—

> "The very beadsmen learn to bend their bows
> Of double-fatal yew;"

and among the accounts of the churchwardens for the parish of Ashburton, in Devon, we find such entries as sums received "from lopping off the yew-tree," and payments "to the Bowyer" in 1558-9. But in the days of Elizabeth a bow of English yew cost but 2s., while one of the "best foreign yew" cost 6s. 8d. Spanish wood was then, rather strangely, considering the relations of the two countries at that time, the most highly prized.

That yew was used in the Palm Sunday procession is also clear; but here again the fact hardly accounts for the frequency of the presence of the tree near the church, for its branches were by no means the only substitute for palm that was employed. In an old sermon for this festival we find this passage: "For encheson (reason) we have not olyfe yt bereth grene leves we takon in stede of hit hew & palmes wyth, & beroth abowte in procession." From this usage yew came to be called palm in many places. An entry in the accounts just quoted, under the date 1558-9, mentions a sum paid "to the Bowyer for cutting out of the polme tree"; as late as 1709 the churchwardens of S. Dunstan's, Canterbury, caused a "palm-tree" to be planted in their churchyard, and the accounts of Woodbury, Devon, for 1775 refer to "a yew or palm tree planted ye south side of the Church." But in many places the willow is so named, especially in the North of England, and churchwardens' accounts in London frequently allude to the purchase of that and of box, as well as yew, against Palm Sunday.

The appropriateness of the yew to a graveyard has been asserted on the two opposite grounds, that its heavy foliage has long made it emblematic of death, and that its wonderful

vitality makes it a type of resurrection and eternal life. Sir Thomas Browne, in his "Hydriotaphia," speaks of both ideas: "Whether the planting of yewe in churchyards hold not its original from ancient funeral rites, or as an emblem of the resurrection from its perpetual verdure, may," he allows, "admit conjecture." It is certain that among the ancients yew shared with cypress the mournful honour of being used at funereal solemnities, and that the tradition of such usage reached to our own country, and almost, if not quite, to our own time. Shakespeare speaks of a "shroud of white, stuck all with yew"; and branches of yew were formerly carried at funerals at Ashill, in Somersetshire. On the other hand, the life of the tree is extraordinary. At Fountains Abbey are examples which are supposed to have attained their full growth in the twelfth century; and a huge tree in Darley churchyard, Derbyshire, has been variously estimated at from 700 to 2,500 years old. The tallest specimen in England is in the churchyard at Harlington, near Hounslow, and stands sixty feet high.

There are not wanting antiquaries who, with much reason, consider that the connection between the yew and consecrated ground stretches back to a time before Palm Sunday processions or long bows were thought of. Dr. Rock considers that the alliance has subsisted from the days of the conversion of our English forefathers; while others hold that the presence of a noble tree growing in its natural beauty was the occasion of the choice of the site for the church.

Owing perhaps to its close connection with sacred things, the yew is held to be specially hateful to witches, and any place sheltered by it is safe from their attacks. In

Cornwall, to pluck branches or blooms from any shrubs or flowers planted in a churchyard is considered unlucky; and it is alleged that ghosts from the despoiled ground will haunt the house of the depredator.

In marked contrast to the sombreness and heaviness of the yew is the rose with its delicate tints and fragile form; but this queen of flowers has also been consecrated to the service of the burial-ground. At Ockley, in Surrey, it used to be customary to plant roses upon the graves, especially for a maiden so to adorn the last resting-place of her lost lover. In Wales also the pretty custom once obtained of growing a white rose on the grave of a maiden, and a red one on that of anyone distinguished especially for benevolence. The Greeks and Romans adorned their sepulchres with roses; and Manning, the historian of Surrey, and others have seen the survival of classical usage in these British practices.

At Barnes, in Surrey, died, on December 18th, 1652, one Edward Rose, who in his testamentary direction for the adornment of his last resting-place was probably influenced by the thought of his own surname, rather than by any recollection of this Greek usage. He bequeathed the sum of £5 for the erection of a wooden partition in the churchyard at the spot chosen for his grave; and £20 to be expended in the purchase of land, the rent of which was to be devoted to the relief of the poor of the parish after the needful sum had been disbursed to plant and maintain beneath the shelter of this wooden frame three rose-trees. The rents were, or till lately were, spent in bread; the rose-trees of the donor have been forgotten.

That same synod of Exeter, above noticed, made a decree

concerning the grass of the churchyard, the propriety of which, though it will now be almost everywhere admitted, was at one time generally denied or ignored in England. "We decree," say the Exeter fathers, "that if the rectors of churches, or parish priests, to whom the custody of burial-grounds chiefly belongs, shall suffer their own or any other cattle to feed there, they shall be severely punished by their ordinaries." Until comparatively recently it was quite usual for sheep to be pastured in God's Acre; and it is still occasionally done, although every dictate of good-feeling and reverence is surely against such usage of ground consecrated both to God and to the memory of the dead. Cows also were sometimes fed there, and milk from animals living in such a pasture was considered in the North of England a sovereign remedy against the ill-effects of being "witch-ridden."

The belief that churchyards are haunted is natural enough. If spirits "walk" at all, if anywhere communion is to be held with the souls of the departed, the burial-ground is obviously the most likely place for such ghostly perambulations and meetings. We are all of us slow to realize, or half-unwilling to believe, that soul and body actually and entirely part company, and thus we cling to the fancy that where the latter lies there the former must delight to linger. Twice in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" Puck alludes to the haunting of churchyards. In the closing scene of the play he sings—

> "Now it is the time of night,
> That the graves, all gaping wide,
> Everyone lets forth his sprite,
> In the churchyard paths to glide;"

in the Third Act (Scene 2) he speaks of the morning star,

> "Aurora's harbinger,
> At whose approach, ghosts wandering here and there,
> Troop home to churchyards."

Hamlet, too, exclaims (Act iii., 2)

> "'Tis now the very witching hour of night,
> When churchyards yawn."

According to one tradition it was the rule at one time to provide each church and churchyard with a ghostly defender against the spells of witches or their diabolic practices. In order to do this a dog or a boar was buried alive under one of the corner-stones of the building, and its apparition kept off all profane intruders. In case any person buried in the churchyard is unable to rest, but haunts the place at night, the ghost may be laid (so at any rate it was supposed in Staffordshire not very long ago) by cutting a turf, at least four inches square, from his grave, and laying it under the altar for four days. Cornwall at one time boasted the possession of several priests who were famous as ghost-layers, the Rev. Thomas Flavel being the most noted. His services were in great demand, and his methods were of a masterful kind; for he appears generally to have visited the haunted churchyard armed with a horse-whip, and to have combined exorcism with vigorous flogging.

It is no very far cry from ghost-laying to the question of spells and divination, and churchyard folk-lore provides several items of information on these matters.

The weird rites of S. Mark's Eve (April 24th) are known to most people. On this night the wraiths of those who are to die during the following twelve months pass in grim and ghostly procession into the church; and he who has the

courage to stand in the churchyard, at some spot commanding a view of the porch, from eleven that night until one o'clock the next morning, for three successive years, shall on the third occasion see the prophetic vision. Such was the belief, and it still lingers in some places, though it is not always held necessary to pass a two years' probation before the watch is rewarded. There are many stories, some of them remarkably circumstantial, of this vigil having been kept with the anticipated result. In some cases the procession is alleged to be somewhat more formal, the wraiths of the doomed walking in solemn state around the churchyard, preceded by the parish clerk. An old man in the parish of Fishlake, Yorkshire, kept these vigils regularly at the beginning of the present century. Some years since Mr. Edward Peacock, the well-known antiquary, communicated to *Notes and Queries* (vol. iv., p. 470) the following certified account of one of these vigils, copied from Holly's "Lincolnshire Notes":—

"At Axholme, alias Haxey, in y^e^ Isle, one Mr. Edward Vicars (curate to Mr. Wm. Dalby, vicar), together with one Robert Hallywell, a taylor, intending on St. Marke's even at night to watch in y^e^ church porch to see who should die in y^e^ yeare following (to this purpose using divers ceremonies), they addressing themselves to the busines, Vicars (being then in his chamber) wished Hallywell to be going before and he would presently follow him. Vicars fell asleep, and Hallywell (attending his coming in y^e^ church porch) forthwith sees certaine shapes psenting themselves to his view, resemblances (as he thought) of divers of his neighbours, who he did nominate; and all of them dyed the yeare following; and Vicars himselfe (being asleep) his phantome

was seen of him also, and dyed with y^e^ rest. This sight made Hallywell so agast that he looks like a Ghoast ever since. The lord Sheffield (hearing this relation) sent for Hallywell to receive account of it. The fellow fearing my Lord would cause him to watch the church porch againe, he hid himselfe in the Carrs till he was almost starved. The number of those that died (whose phantasmes Hallywell saw) was as I take it about fower score.

THO. COD, Rector Ecclie de Laceby."

The testator was a native of Haxey, where this took place. It was commonly supposed that if the watcher himself was to die, he fell asleep during his vigil, and so would see nothing; a case is quoted, however, of an old woman who spent S. Mark's Eve in the porch of S. Mary's, Scarborough, and who saw her own figure pass in the ghostly train. There is a curious story of the apparition of a late rector of Ford, Northumberland, one Mr. March, being seen by two casual passers-by on this mysterious night: robed in his surplice the phantom flitted through the chancel door, which opened for him to pass, and having reached a certain point in the churchyard, he vanished. That night the rector was taken ill, and died the following day, his grave being dug just where the vision had disappeared.

The same belief is found in the Isle of Man, and is connected with the same night, although it is usually called *Laa'l Maghal tosher*, or the Great Feast-day of S. Maghold, a local saint, whose chief festival coincides with S. Mark's Day. The superstition is sometimes transferred to Midsummer Eve.

James Montgomery has some verses founded on the

practice here noticed, called "The Vigil of S. Mark," in which the whole idea is set forth in these lines :—

> "'Tis now,' replied the village belle,
> 'S. Mark's mysterious eve ;
> And all that old traditions tell
> I tremblingly believe :—
> How when the midnight signal tolls,
> Along the churchyard green
> A mournful train of sentenced souls
> In winding sheets are seen :
>
> The ghosts of all whom Death shall doom
> Within the coming year,
> In pale procession walk the gloom
> Amid the silence drear.'"

Tom Hood also, in his "Oddities," has a story, humorous yet not without its touch of pathos, entitled "S. Mark's Eve." The most prosaic and practical way of regarding this weird superstition is that of a Yorkshire sexton, who in a past generation is said to have kept the vigil regularly, with a view to forecasting the year's gains in grave-digging !

Weddings, as well as funerals, may be foretold by a visit to the churchyard at the proper time and in due form. On Midsummer Eve, the maid who would know who her husband shall be must go to the churchyard at night ; and as the clock strikes twelve she must run thrice round the church repeating, without stopping, these words, or others like them (for there are various versions)—

> "Hemp-seed I sow,—let hemp-seed grow ;
> He that will my sweetheart be, come after me and mow."

As she runs she scatters hemp-seed, and if she be bold enough to look behind her just at the conclusion of her course, she will see her future husband mowing in her wake.

Gay, in his "Thursday, or the Spell," alludes to this practice :—

> "At eve last midsummer no sleep I sought,
> But to the field a bag of hemp-seed brought ;
> I scattered round the seed on every side,
> And three times in a trembling accent cried,—
> 'This hemp-seed with my virgin hand I sow,
> Who shall my true love be, the crop shall mow.'
> I straight look'd back, and, if my eyes speak truth,
> With his keen scythe, behind me came the youth."

In some places S. Valentine's Eve is said to be the proper time for this form of divination ; but, however suitable it may be for love-charms, the 13th February is hardly as congenial as midsummer for midnight excursions.

Witches have always been credited with a special love for things ghastly and repulsive, witness the contents of the witches' cauldron in "Macbeth"; the churchyard, therefore, naturally forms a perfect arsenal of talismans and charms for them. "Bones, hairs, nails, and teeth of the dead were the treasures of old sorcerers," says Sir Thomas Browne. Among the magic cures for disease and pain, or safeguards against them, several have been gathered from this source. A ring made of three nails taken from coffins in three different churchyards used to be considered in Shropshire an infallible preventive of rheumatism. In the same county a woman's front tooth got from a graveyard and carried in the pocket is supposed to protect a man from toothache, and similarly a man's tooth will protect a woman. Less gruesome is a necklace made of small twigs from an elder-tree growing in the churchyard, as a talisman against whooping-cough ; this also is found in Shropshire. A Cornish cure for a swelling in the neck is to go before the

sunrise of May Day to the grave of the last young man buried in the churchyard, and to pass the hand thrice from the head to the foot of the grave and thence to the part affected. The Devon folk have a cure for boils of a somewhat analogous nature. It consists in walking six times round a grave newly filled, and crawling thrice across it on a dark night; the performer of the ceremony being, not the sufferer, but some man on behalf of a woman, and *vice versa*.

So far the superstitious practices recounted have had as their object the cure of ailments; there are others more questionable in purpose. He, for instance, who "maketh haste to be rich" may gain a large sum of money if he can tie up a black cat with ninety-nine knots, and, taking it to the church door, succeed in selling it there to the Devil under the pretence that it is a hare. Such is a Northumbrian belief, but one wonders if even a man from "canny Newcastle" could so easily deceive the Prince of Darkness. Should any desperate and unhappy man or woman desire to bargain with Satan with a view to gaining the unhallowed powers of witchcraft, the following (so say the Cornishmen) is one way of effecting the purpose. One must present one's self at the altar and receive the Blessed Sacrament; but instead of consuming it, conceal it and carry it away. As the object is blasphemous, we must not be surprised if the means are sacrilegious. Then at midnight this stolen host is to be carried thrice around the church, going from south to north; and at the third time a huge toad will be met, standing open-mouthed. The Sacrament is to be given to this creature, which will then breathe thrice upon the giver, and the latter will at once become a witch or a warlock.

On the other hand, the consecrated soil of a churchyard is a protection against the power of spells, and in Wales people have been known to gather some of it and scatter it upon themselves and their possessions to prevent them from being "overlooked."

Before leaving this section of our subject, one or two instances of things lucky and unlucky should be quoted. And first of all the common unpopularity of the north side of the churchyard for interments claims notice. The most casual observer must have been often struck with the fact that old churchyards frequently have few mounds or memorial stones upon the northern side, while the southern one may be already inconveniently crowded. The almost vacant and less regarded portion which lies almost all day under the shadow of the church, contains probably a number of little graves, where still-born and unbaptized infants lie, but comparatively few others. And this is the case in country churchyards—in towns the increased value of land, or the business-like arrangements of cemetery-boards, has not suffered the interference of much sentiment—all the country over. White, describing the churchyard at Selborne, says, "Considering the size of the church, and the extent of the parish, the churchyard is very scanty; and especially as all wish to be buried on the south side, which is become such a mass of mortality that no person can be there interred without disturbing or displacing the bones of his ancestors. . . . At the east end are a few graves, yet none, till very lately, on the north side; but as two or three families of best repute have begun to bury in that quarter, prejudice may wear out by degrees, and their example be followed by the rest of the neighbourhood."

An account of "The Exemplary Death of Mr. Benjamin Rhodes, Steward to Thomas, Earl of Elgin" (published in 1657) tells us that "he requested to be interred in the open churchyard on the north side (to crosse the received superstition, as he thought, of the constant choice of the south side) near the new chappel." As an illustration of the kind of interment which was suffered to take place on the north side, we may quote the sequel to the murder of M'Donald by Robert Fitzgerald in Ireland in 1786; "the body of Mr. Fitzgerald," a contemporary account informs us, "immediately after execution was carried to the ruins of Turlagh House. . . . On the next day it was carried to the churchyard of Turlagh, where he was buried on what is generally termed the wrong side of the church, in his clothes without a coffin."

The north was of old mystically supposed to typify the Devil, and a usage prevailed in some places of opening a door on that side of the church at the administration of Holy Baptism, for the exit of the exorcised demon. Milton, in more than one passage, refers to the Evil One as holding sway in the north; for example, the Divine Father, speaking of him, says:—

> ". . . Such a foe
> Is rising, who intends to erect his throne,
> Equal to ours, throughout the spacious north."

The same idea is put into the mouth of La Pucelle by Shakespeare when he makes her ("King Henry VI.," Pt. 1, Act v., 3) invoke the demons, as—

> ". . . Speedy helpers, that are substitutes
> Under the lordly monarch of the north."

This fancy probably influenced the choice of grave-spaces;

and the fact that the south lies for the most part in warmth and sunlight, while the north is constantly enveloped in cold shadows, unquestionably gives a more attractive appearance to the former. Both these considerations perhaps joined to make the south side the usual position for the main entrance to a parish church; and this further affected the question of burials; since the graves which lay along the most frequented path would constantly appeal to the passers-by for their charitable prayers.

It is considered unlucky for a wedding party to meet a funeral; and in some few churchyards, where there are two or more entrances, the different processions use different gates. No bridal pair would under any conditions pass through the lych-gate at Barthomley, in Cheshire; and at Madeley, in Shropshire, funeral and wedding trains approach and leave by separate ways. The lych-gate, or corpse-gate, with its pent-house roof, is specially provided for the shelter of a funeral while awaiting the priest, but it is only in a few cases that it is exclusively used for that purpose; it is frequently, perhaps, where it exists, commonly, the principal gateway of the churchyard. Several good ancient examples of the lych-gate are found in Kent, as at Beckenham and Burnsall. There are now many excellent modern instances in all parts of the country.

In Shropshire it is thought unlucky for the wedding carriages to be turned at the church door; so that they must either return to the house by some route different from that by which they came, or go some distance past the door for the purpose of turning elsewhere. A bridal party in the Isle of Man used to perambulate the church three times before entering it, according to Waldron's account of the

customs of his own day (1726); and similarly a funeral at that date walked thrice around the churchyard cross. There was a singular custom, surviving well into the present century, in Shropshire, of decorating the churchyard gate for a wedding after a unique fashion. It is described in "The Memorials of a Quiet Life," as taking place at the author's wedding at Stoke-upon-Tern, in 1829; "all the silver spoons, tankards, watches, and ornaments of the neighbouring farmers were fastened on white cloths drawn over hoops, so as to make a kind of trophy on each side of the church gate, which is, I understand, a Shropshire custom." There are instances of this curious, yet not unpleasing, usage in the county so late as 1840.

The churchyard has not, however, always been reserved to sacred uses; our forefathers saw nothing incongruous in having both traffic and conviviality within its walls, and the Church had to protest continually against such unseemly practices. A quotation, given above, from S. Gregory in a letter of 601, shows how church wakes came to be celebrated within the sacred garth; since he recommends that on the anniversary of the dedication of a church "booths be constructed around them" for the celebration of the festival "with religious joyousness." It was not long, however, before the religious element began to take a secondary place in the village wake, and frolic amusement, often harmless enough in itself, but singularly unsuited to holy ground, became the foremost feature. The date of the wake was the Sunday nearest (either before or after) to the feast day of the church's patron saint; and all kinds of rural sports, with dances and jollity, and the usual surroundings of a rural fair, filled up the day, mass having first been heard. Probably,

so far as possible, the rule was observed which obtained in Wales so late as 1804, of keeping the sports, although within the churchyard, to the north side of it. Malkin, writing at that date of the "Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of South Wales," says, "The custom of dancing in the churchyard at their feasts and revels is universal in Radnorshire, and very common in other parts of the Principality. Indeed, this solemn abode is rendered a kind of circus for every sport and exercise. The young men play at fives and tennis against the wall of the church. It is not, however, to be understood that they literally dance over the graves of their progenitors. This amusement takes place on the north side of the churchyard, where it is the custom not to bury." At Stoke S. Milborough, Shropshire, these churchyard sports were only dropped about the year 1820.

The extent to which liberty in this respect ran into license is best shown by the character of the enactments against it. A provincial synod in Scotland in 1225 passed several canons, the sixty-seventh of which orders "that dances or filthy games which engender lasciviousness be not performed in churches and churchyards"; and the seventy-fifth, "that wrestling matches or sports be not permitted in churches or churchyards upon any festivals." In 1368 Simon Langham, Archbishop of Canterbury, issued a mandate against markets being held on Sunday in the Isle of Sheppey so near the church as to interrupt the celebration of mass. A statute (13 Edward I., cap. 6) had already been passed forbidding the holding of markets and fairs in churchyards. There are other canons and injunctions which show that the disorders not infrequently invaded the sacred building itself; but none of these efforts of the authorities seem to have

been very effectual so far as regards the churchyard. That enclosure apparently came to be considered the public place of the parish. Fairs and markets were held there, not at the wake only, but at other times; games of all kinds were played within it, and secular, as well as ecclesiastical, courts were held therein. Dramatic performances have been given in the churchyard of S. Chad's, Shrewsbury; miracle plays were enacted, as a matter of course, on consecrated ground in many places. The York Fabric Rolls give numerous illustrations of the uses to which churchyards were put of old; in 1416 the parishioners of S. Michael-le-Belfry, York, complain "that a common market of vendibles is held in the churchyard on Sundays and holidays, and divers things, and goods, and rushes, are exposed there for sale, and horses stand over the bodies of the dead there buried, and defile the graves, to the great dishonour and manifest hindrance of divine worship, on account of the clamour of those who stand about;" and in 1472 it was reported that in the parishes of "Helemsay et Stamfordbrig (Helmsley and Stamfordbridge) all the parishioners there hold pleas and other temporal meetings in the church and churchyard." Everywhere the ecclesiastical authorities evidently strove hard to preserve the sanctity of the place, but the habit had grown strong by gradual development, and was consequently deeply rooted before the effort to eradicate it was made in earnest; and by that time the popular conscience had become so used to such practises that it was no longer shocked by them. The playing of games in churchyards lingered on well into the present century; a fair even was held in Pershore churchyard, Worcestershire, down to 1838. But the revived church life of the latter half of

the nineteenth century has succeeded in creating a higher tone in these matters; the sacredness of holy things and places is becoming more recognized; and customs such as these die out. In early days they were largely permitted in simplicity; they were suffered to continue through carelessness; we of to-day cannot plead the excuse of the former, it is well, therefore, that we should throw off the condemnation of the latter.

A curious custom—one hesitates whether to count it a game or not—once obtained in several Midland parishes, under the name of "clipping the church." It existed at Ellesmere till nearly 1820; at Wellington it lasted until about 1860; at Birmingham it was in vogue until about a century since; and at Edgmond was revived as recently as 1867 with certain modern modifications. The point of the whole performance consists in a number of people joining hand in hand, and so completely surrounding the church in this fashion as to "clip," or embrace, it. In the two first-named parishes this used to be done by the school children, with a good deal of tumult and shouting, every Shrove Tuesday. In its revived form at Edgmond it constitutes part of the annual "feast" of the parish schools. The charity children clipped the church in Birmingham. At Bradford-on-Avon, also, this custom only died out within the last half-century. The origin of the practice seems to be unknown, but it is generally supposed to typify an affection for the old parish church.

Another form of parochial festivity, which sometimes took place in the churchyard, was the Church-Ale, a method of procuring funds for charitable works which to us of to-day seems certainly strange, and to some even reprehensible;

yet it appears generally to have been conducted with decency and propriety. It was, in fact, nothing more than the "Parish Tea" of a bygone age, an age when tea itself was unknown, and home-brewed ale was the staple drink of the English people. The initiative of the Church-Ale was as a rule taken by the churchwardens. It is thus described by Philip Stubs, in his "Anatomie of Abuses," published in 1595:—"In certaine townes where dronken Bacchus beares swaie, against Christmas, Easter, and Whitsondaie, or some other tyme, the churchwardens of every parishe, with the consent of the whole parishe, provide half a score or twentie quarters of mault, whereof some they buy of the churche stocks, and some is given them of the parishioners themselves, every one conferring somewhat according to his abilitie, whiche maulte being made into very strong ale or bere, is sette to sale either in the churche or some other place assigned to that purpose. Then when this is set abroche, well is he that can gete the soonest to it, and spend the most at it. In this kinde of practice they continue sixe weekes, a quarter of a yeare, yea, half-a-yeare together. That money, they say, is to repaire their churches and chappels with, to buy bookes for service, cuppes for the celebration of the Sacrament, surplesses for Sir John, and such other necessaries." In this account we must allow for a certain amount of exaggeration, for the writer was a Puritan, who saw in a "May poale" a "stinking idol," and fancied the whole world was out of course. It is improbable that the Church-Ale was extended—unless in some very rare instances—to anything like the length spoken of by Stubs; a day or two appears to have been the usual period; and the churchyard, in which occasionally a bower was erected

for the purpose, was not unusually the place, and not the church, for gathering the contributions of the people: though the scene of the feast was often the church-house, a neighbouring barn, or some other entirely secular spot. The behaviour of the people, also, can hardly have been such as Stubs hints at, since we find in 1651 as many as seventy-two parish priests in Somersetshire certifying that during a Church-Ale, not only was "the service better attended than on other days" (which perhaps is not surprising), but also that "the service of God was more solemnly performed." There is a passage in Speght's "Glossary to Chaucer," which, although referring primarily to wakes, has its bearing on the conduct of the parishioners at such times as these. "It was the manner," he says, "in times past . . . . for parishioners to meet in their church-houses or churchyards, and there to have a drinking-fit for the time; here they used to end many quarrels between neighbour and neighbour; hither came their wives in comely manner." The profits of these Ales were sometimes considerable, as one example will show. In 1532 an Ale was held in the village of Chaddesden for the purpose of helping the building of the tower of All Saints', Derby, when a sum of £25 8s. 6d. clear was raised, equal to a very large amount, probably £400, in modern money. Shakespeare alludes to these Ales in "Pericles;" Gower (as Chorus) in the prologue says that the subject of the play

> ". . . hath been sung at festivals
> On ember eves, and holy ales."

Rural sports usually accompanied the Church-Ale; and it became a general parish festival. It must, however, in the nature of things have led to incidents regretable, if not

actually disgraceful, at times; and we may be thankful it is a thing of the past: even while we question whether some of the modern methods of raising money for charities are not quite as much open to criticism.

We have seen that courts of law were sometimes held in churchyards; we shall not be much surprised, therefore, at finding that the parish stocks commonly stood there. A usual position was just inside or outside the gate; probably for much the same reason as led to the church door being used for parish notices,—each was a conspicuously public place, which every parishioner was expected to pass. The stocks at Walton-on-the-Hill, Liverpool, stood against the churchyard wall, and were used as late as 1857 or 1858; at Crowle, in Lincolnshire, they were within the gate, and in this case also were used within the last half-century. The market-place was perhaps a more common situation in towns, but in villages the churchyard was often the only available open space.

Secularized as the sacred enclosure of God's Acre too often was in the various ways above mentioned, it had after all a share in the services of the Church, besides those solemn rites which especially appertained to it as a graveyard. The procession on Palm Sunday wound around it, and made its first station at the churchyard cross. A pulpit often stood within it, especially if it was the garth of a cathedral or other important church, and from this sermons were frequently preached to the crowd that stood around. Hereford, Worcester, and Norwich had their preaching crosses, or open-air pulpits, as well as London, whose "Paul's Cross" was famous.

Public charities, in the form of doles, were also often

distributed within this holy ground. Of these one of the most curious is the "Biddenden Maids Charity." In the parish of Biddenden, Kent, is a piece of land known as the "Bread and Cheese Land," from the fact that its rent is annually spent in those eatables for distribution among the poor on Easter Day. The charity is said to have been instituted by two maidens of the names of Mary and Eliza Chulkhurst, who were born in the year 1100 joined together at hip and shoulder. For thirty-four years, so the story goes, they lived still united in this unnatural manner, and their effigies still mark the cakes given away in accordance with their will. The story is now discredited by antiquaries, though it was certainly believed in Biddenden for a long period. The charity is now distributed at the old workhouse, but formerly this was done at the tower door of the church. A dole consisting of bread, purchased from the rent of the "White-bread Close" at Barford S. Michael's, Oxford, used until a few years since to be distributed in a most disorderly and promiscuous fashion. The loaves were simply flung to the people, who came in great numbers, not from that parish only, to be scrambled for in the churchyard. It is now given in a form and manner more likely to benefit the poor, than simply to reach the strong. Some seventy years since the good folk of Madron, Cornwall, witnessed a curious spectacle, consisting of an act of public penance. As they came out of church one Sunday, they found a servant of an old gentleman in the neighbourhood standing beside a large tombstone, on which loaves of bread were piled. To each poor parishioner that passed, the man handed a loaf, saying at the same time, "I, A. B., last week told my master a lie."

At Thornton, near Sherbourne, Dorsetshire, there is a certain tombstone with a hole in it, within which the tenants of the lord of the manor place five shillings each S. Thomas' Day. So long as this is done annually before noon the tenants are free from any demand for the tithe of their hay.

The churchyard at S. Germoe, Cornwall, has a curious stone structure known as S. Germoe's chair, or King Germoe's throne. It is variously alleged to have been a seat used by the royal saint, a chair for the priest officiating at some outdoor ceremony, and a resting-place for pilgrims to the founder's tomb. It is possible that it is the mutilated remains of the shrine of S. Germoe. Another Cornish legend of a patron saint comes from S. Dennis: it is alleged here that when the saint suffered decapitation in Paris, blood fell on the stones of this churchyard, and that the phenomenon had since been occasionally repeated, as a warning of impending calamity.

Just as the tower now generally has its clock, so of old the churchyard usually had its sun-dial; the measuring of the flight of time being no small part of the summons to prepare for eternity. In some cases the dial was placed horizontally on a pillar upon the south side of the church, at others a vertical dial was affixed to the external wall of the building, often just over the main entrance. Not a few churchyard dials still remain. At S. Anne's, Woodplumpton, is one dated 1598; another stands near the Cathedral Church of Manchester; Garstang, Lancashire, has one with the date 1757; and in the same county, Hambleton, one dated 1670, and Heapey, one as late as 1826. The broken shaft of the old churchyard cross has been, in more than one instance, used as a pedestal for the dial; such is the case at Shaw, in

Lancashire, and at Crowle, in Lincolnshire. Several of the dials bear well-chosen mottoes. At Goosnargh is one, dated 1748, inscribed *Vive memor quam sis aevi brevis* ("Horace," Sat. ii., 6); at Aldingham we find a longer motto—

"Use the present time;
Redeem the past;
For thus uncertainly,
Though imperceptibly,
The night of life approaches."

CHAPTER V.

Graves and Funerals.

"HE that looks for urns and old sepulchral relicks," says Sir Thomas Browne, in his "Hydriotaphia," "must not seek them in the ruins of temples, where no religion anciently placed them. These were found in a field, according to ancient custom in noble or private burial, the old practice of the Canaanites, the family of Abraham, the burying-place of Joshua in the borders of his possessions; and also agreeable unto Roman practice to bury by highways, whereby their monuments were under eye—memorials of themselves, and mementoes of mortality unto living passengers, whom the epitaphs of great ones were fain to beg to stay and look upon them,—a language though sometimes used, not so proper in church inscriptions. The sensible rhetoric of the dead, to examplarity of good life, first admitted the bones of pious men and martyrs within church walls, which in succeeding ages crept into promiscuous practice: while Constantine was peculiarly favoured to be admitted into the church porch, and the first thus buried in England was in the days of Cuthred." We have already seen that interment even in the churchyard was not a primitive practice, but it came gradually into use about the sixth century. The Council of Braga, in 563, permits burials around churches, but forbids them within; the Council of Nantes, in 660, with the same prohibition, allows them in the *atrium*, or

courtyard, and in all the subsidiary buildings, such as cloisters. The feeling that interment within the church was a mark of greater honour than burial in the garth, is illustrated by the legend of S. Swithin. The monks of Winchester, it is said, were anxious to translate his venerable relics from the common burial-ground to the chancel; but the modesty of the saint was such that, at his intercession, it rained continuously for forty days, so as to prevent them from carrying out their purpose. S. Swithin died in 862, and the feast of his translation is on July 15th. Whatever foundation (if any) there is for the story, the body was after all removed, and that twice; first by Bishop Ethelwold in 971, and again on the erection of the present cathedral by Bishop Walkelyn in 1093.

Leaving, however, the purely historical question, let us turn to our English folk-lore and customs with regard to interments. And first of all the position of the grave claims our notice. We have already remarked that the site used almost always to be on some side of the church other than the north; as a matter of fact, the south was the most commonly used, and then the east; the west is often scarcely more fully occupied than the north. But the direction of the grave was as much a settled arrangement as its situation. Guiderius, in Shakespeare's 'Cymbeline,' says to his companion, who is about to dig a grave for the seemingly dead Imogen:

> "Nay, Cadwal, we must lay his head to the east;
> My father hath a reason for 't."

This almost certainly means with the head so placed as to face the east; according to the direction of Durandus, in the "De Officio Mortuorum," "everyone ought to be buried so that, the head being placed at the west, the feet are turned

towards the east, in the same position as that in which he prays." This situation for the burial of a body is very ancient, and was very widely common, as is well illustrated by another passage from that store-house of mortuary lore, Browne's "Hydriotophia": "The Persians lay north and south, the Megarians and Phœnicians placed their heads to the east; the Athenians, some think, towards the west, which Christians still retain. And Bede will have it to be the posture of our Saviour." One of the "Marprelate" tracts, "Martin's Month's Mind," published in 1589, says "he would not be laid east and west (for he ever went against the hair), but north and south." The Bishop of Ely, in his "Articles of Inquiry" of 1662, asks, "When graves are digged, are they made six feet deep (at the least), and east and west?" Thomas Hearne, the antiquary, who died in 1735, commanded his executors to see, by means of a compass, that his grave lay exactly in that direction.

For this custom there are several reasons given (as there are for the orientation of a church) besides those suggested by the Venerable Bede and by Durandus. Thus placed, facing the sunrise, the dead are, as it were, looking for the coming of the Great Day, for the rising once more of the "Sun of Righteousness"; again there is a prophecy of the Second Advent (Zechariah xiv., 4) which declares that "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the East." In churchyards this position is still almost universally maintained for the graves; in public cemeteries it has, unfortunately, been largely abandoned.

There is a superstition in many places that it is something worse than unlucky to be the first corpse buried in a new

churchyard; the Devil, in fact, is supposed to have an unquestionable claim to the possession of such a body. In Germany and in Scandinavia the enemy is sometimes outwitted by the interment of a pig or a dog, before any Christian burial takes place. For a long time the people were unwilling to use the churchyard of S. John's, Bovey-Tracey, for this reason; and only began to do so after a stranger had been laid to rest therein. The same idea prevails in the North of England and in Scotland. There can be little doubt that in this we have a relic of the Pagan custom alluded to in a former chapter, namely, the offering of an animal, or even of a human, sacrifice at the foundation of a new building. Cases of the burial of animals in consecrated ground are not wholly unknown in England, but it would be difficult probably to prove their connection with this weird fancy. In 1849, during some excavations within the Collegiate Church of Staindrop, Durham, a human skeleton was exhumed, with that of a dog at his feet. The man was supposed to have been a Neville, of Raby Castle, and the hound was probably in this case some special favourite with its master, killed and buried with him, with more than questionable good taste.

The practice of placing in the grave specimens of such things as the dead specially regarded, or most frequently used, in life, is ancient and widespread; and not unnatural amongst those Pagans who looked forward to a future life not greatly different in its requirements from the present one. Among Christians its use is less defencible. In the funeral urns, which formed the text of Sir Thomas Browne's famous treatise, were found "substances resembling combs, plates like boxes, fastened with iron pins, and handsomely

overwrought like the necks or bridges of musical instruments; long brass plates overwrought like the handles of neat implements; brazen nippers to pull away hair; and in one a kind of opal, yet maintaining a bluish colour." Sometimes the idea is that of making provision for the journey to "that bourn from which no traveller returns." Thus, somewhat pathetically, the Esquimaux of Greenland lay a dog's head within the grave of an infant, that the sagacity of the former may guide the ignorance of the latter; so the ancient Greeks provided their dead with the fare demanded by Charon for the ferry of the Styx. The Rev. S. Baring-Gould, in his "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," quotes an instance known to himself as occurring in Cleveland, Yorkshire, only two years before the date of his writing, where a man was buried "with a candle, a penny, and a bottle of wine in his coffin: the candle to light him along the road, the penny to pay the ferry, and the wine to nourish him." These explanations were given by some rustic attendants at the funeral in question. The modern Greeks place parboiled wheat in the graves of their dead; which they hold to signify in some way the resurrection.

In the nature of the case the idea of lucky or unlucky days for funerals could hardly arise, as it has done with other ceremonies, the date of which lies more within the limits of choice; yet it is an ominous thing for a parish if a grave stand open on a Sunday, for then, it is believed in Gloucestershire, another death will take place there within a month, or, as some say, within a week. A somewhat similar superstition exists in Alford, Lincolnshire; where, if a dead body lie unburied over a Sunday, it is expected that another death will follow during the week. In Northumberland

and Durham it is said that funerals go in triplets; when one occurs, two others will quickly follow. Singularly enough the same idea prevails in Rome, concerning the sacred college; the cardinals always die, they say, in threes.

The weather may also have a meaning at a funeral. It is sometimes alleged that "Blessed are the dead whom the rain rains on"; but on the other hand, if the sun shines with special brightness in the face of anyone present at the funeral, it is to mark him out as the next to fall before the reaper Death.

A strange idea was once held in the West of England, that the presence of the body of a still-born infant in a grave was a guarantee of the eternal salvation of whoever else occupied it. This was the belief within the present century at Devonport. In Northumberland, at Edmonton, near London, and elsewhere, it was customary to inter these infants in the next grave opened for some other person; but it does not appear that any special virtue was attached to their presence. To tread upon the grave of a still-born child, or of one unbaptized, was supposed by the Border folk to produce an incurable disease, the "grave-merels."

At almost all times, and in nearly all lands, it has been usual to associate flowers with funerals. Their frail and short-lived beauty forms so obvious a type of the life of many, and to Christians their annual withering and blooming again comprise so attractive a picture of the resurrection of the body, that we can feel no surprise at their use.

The body was often covered, or surrounded on its bier, with flowers. Friar Laurence ("Romeo and Juliet," Act iv., 5) says:—

> "Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary
> On this fair corse;"

and Queen Katherine ("King Henry VIII.," Act iv., 2) thus expresses her wishes :—

> "When I am dead, good wench,
> Let me be used with honour: strew me over
> With maiden flowers."

In his description of "the faire and happy milkmaid," Sir Thomas Overbury says, "All her care is that she may die in the spring-time, to have store of flowers stucke upon her winding sheet." This custom was both more natural and more striking in days when open biers were more commonly used than coffins. Waldron, writing of the usages of the Manxmen in the early part of the eighteenth century, tells us that "the poor are carried only on a bier, with an old blanket round them fastened with a skewer." In England, coffins did not come into universal use till the end of the seventeenth century. In the terrier of the vicarage of Caistor, Lincolnshire, for 1717, is this item: "For every grave in the churchyard and without coffin, fourpence, if with coffin, one shilling." The usage of coffinless burial survived in Ireland until about 1818 as a traditional family custom of the Traceys, the Doyles, and the Dalys, all of County Wexford. In London, however, biers seem to have gone out of fashion, at least in some districts, at a much earlier date; for the vestry of S. Helen's, Bishopsgate, ruled in 1564 "that none shall be buryd within the church, unless the dead corpse be coffined in wood." A parish coffin, for the general use of the poorer parishioners, was often provided, and one example still exists at Easingwold, Yorkshire; and at Youghal a coffin-shaped recess in the churchyard wall originally held such a one, when not in use. In these cases, of course, the body was buried only in its winding sheet.

This comparatively modern use of coffins will account for a fact that must often have struck the reader, namely, that whereas a graveyard now fills up with great rapidity, old burial-grounds served their parishes for many centuries. When no coffins (much less leaden ones, brick graves, and other such abominations) were used, the grave spaces were much more quickly ready for use again. Hence the difference in the charges at Caistor and elsewhere.

From this not irrelevant digression, we return once more to the use of flowers. The friends forming the funeral procession frequently carry foliage or flowers of some kind. A Frenchman, Mons. Jorevin de Rocheford, describing the obsequies of a nobleman, as witnessed by himself in England in 1672, speaks of the pall-bearers, the friends, and even the priest, carrying each a bough, which they afterwards dropt upon the coffin. Rosemary was often carried in this way, a fact to which Gay alludes in his "Pastoral Dirge"; and Cartwright's "Ordinary" also has the lines:—

> "Prithee see they have
> A sprig of rosemary, dipp'd in common water,
> To smell at as they walk along the streets."

The choice of this plant is explained for us by Ophelia, who says ("Hamlet," Act iv., 5):—

> "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;"

Drayton, too, in his "Eclogues," tells us how there sent

> "Him rosemary his sweetheart, whose intent
> Is that he her should in remembrance have."

In some places now, everlastings are considered the "correct" blossoms for the occasion, but generally no special flower has precedence; the best procurable being used, with a preference, however, for white ones.

White's "Antiquities of Selborne" says of the church of that parish, "In the middle aisle there is nothing remarkable; but I remember when its beams were hung with garlands in honour of young women of the parish, reputed to have died virgins; and recollect to have seen the clerk's wife cutting, in white paper, the resemblance of gloves, and ribbons to be twisted in knots and roses, to decorate these memorials of chastity. In the church of Farringdon, which is the next parish, many garlands of this sort still remain." White, who died in 1793, at the age of seventy-three years, seems to imply that the custom of bearing these virgins' garlands had gone out before his time in his neighbourhood, though the garlands themselves were still to be seen hanging in churches. A paper read before the Society of Antiquaries in June, 1747, spoke of the custom as having been "used formerly in several parts of this kingdom."

The usage thus alluded to was for some girl, of about the age of the deceased, to carry a garland before the coffin of a maiden; and after the funeral this was suspended in the church. Most of the notices which we have of these emblems speak of them as being composed of paper flowers, adorned with ribbons, and having suspended within them a pair of imitation white gloves,* upon which was written the maiden's name. No doubt at first both the flowers and the gloves were real. A writer in the "Antiquarian Repertory" thus describes the usual form which these garlands latterly took:—"The lower rim or circle was a broad hoop of wood, whereunto was fixed at the sides thereof part of two other

* White gloves were evidently of old considered to be emblematic of maidenhood; witness the custom of giving a pair to the judge who presides at what, by a common figure of speech, is called a *maiden* assize.

hoops, crossing each other at the top at right angles, which formed the upper part, being about one-third longer than the width: these hoops were wholly covered with artificial flowers of paper, dyed horn, and silk . . .; in the vacancy of the inside from the top hung white paper cut in form of gloves, whereon was written the deceased's name, age, etc., together with long slips of various coloured paper or ribbons; these were many times intermixed with gilded or painted empty shells of blown eggs, as further ornaments . . . while other garlands had only a solitary hour-glass hanging therein."

There are many references to these garlands, or crowns as they might be more accurately called, in our poets. Gay says:—

> "To her sweet memory flow'ry garlands strung,
> On her now empty seat aloft were hung."

Miss Seward, alluding to Eyam Church, Derbyshire, wrote in 1792:—

> "Now the low beams with paper garlands hung,
> In memory of some village youth or maid,
> Draw the soft tear, from thrill'd remembrance sprung;
> How oft my childhood marked that tribute paid!"

Shakespeare makes the priest say of Ophelia ("Hamlet," Act v., 1), "She is allowed her virgin crants," using the German word for *crown*. Of these garlands many examples survived until recent times, and some few are still found hanging in their original places. Brand, the author of the "Popular Antiquities," which he wrote about 1795, mentions garlands seen by himself at Stanhope and at Wolsingham in the county of Durham. Several churches round Shrewsbury possessed examples down to about the middle of the present

century; Shrawardine had several till about 1840, Little Ness Chapel had one in 1825, and Hanwood another till 1856. Astley Abbots, near Bridgenorth, and Acton Burwell still have (or very recently had) examples; and the same is true of Abbott's Ann, Hampshire. Winsterley, Shropshire, however, has been most mindful of its maidens' memories, for it has retained no fewer than seven of these crowns. Derbyshire used to have several of these, some of which are still preserved in places other than the church. Matlock formerly had eight of them, Ashford-in-the-Water, near Bakewell, has (or had) five, and Wingfield, near Alfreton, one. In some places the garlands were buried, and not hung in church; in others they were suspended for twelve months and then removed; in those instances where they yet exist it would seem to have been customary to allow them to hang until dust or decay necessitated their removal. A number were taken out of Heanor Church some years since during a thorough cleaning of the building.

In some parts of Wales sprigs of bay are sprinkled along the path before the funeral train. The "brethren" of a friendly society usually carry small pieces of box or other evergreen, when they follow the remains of one of the fraternity; and after the service is concluded, they drop these emblems of abiding remembrance upon the coffin.

From thus adorning the bier of the dead it was a natural step to a similar treatment of the grave. "In strewing their tombs," says Sir Thomas Browne, "the Romans affected the rose; the Greeks amaranthus and myrtle;" the Queen, standing by the grave of Ophelia ("Hamlet," Act v., 1), says—

"Sweets to the sweet, farewell!
I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;

I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave."

Shakespeare has other allusions to this practice in "Romeo and Juliet," "Cymbeline," and "Pericles." Every morning and evening for many days after his funeral the tomb of Dr. Donne, in old S. Paul's, was strewn with costly flowers. There is a tomb in Tonge Church, Staffordshire, to the memory of a member of the Vernon family, on which a garland of roses is placed each Midsummer Day. It is said that this is the relic of an ancient land tenure, by which Henry de Hugefort held certain lands in Norton and Shaw by the service of bringing a chaplet of roses to Roger de la Zouch, lord of the manor, on S. John Baptist's Day; and if he were absent from Tonge, the flowers were to be offered at the shrine of Our Lady in the church. The shrine having long since disappeared, the custom arose of placing the wreath on the nearest tomb, which chanced to be that of the said Vernon. Samuel Pepys, in his Diary, under date April 26th, 1662, writes, "To Gosport; and so rode to Southampton; in our way . . . we observed a little churchyard, where the graves are accustomed to be sowed with sage."

The remembrance of the departed, as exhibited in a decent care for their resting-places, has sensibly increased in England in recent years. Graves are less frequently found neglected and forgotten, with moss-covered stone and weed-grown mound; and churchyards are kept more reverently and tastefully. Much that made graves and funerals hideous in the past has happily gone out of fashion; the nodding plumes, the mutes with their black staves, the "weepers" and sashes, these are for the most part gone.

And in their place the bright beauty of the flowers comes with its lesson of mortality, not the less searching because tender and gentle. So far we have gained much on our forefathers of the last two or three generations, in whose days tastelessness reigned supreme in these things. But we have to guard against the danger—or rather to protest with all our souls against the already accomplished intrusion,—of the spirit of vulgarity, which is rampant in our age; a spirit which shows itself no less in the ostentatious display of costly flowers in the funerals of the rich, than in the tawdry metal frauds that profess to simulate flowers upon the graves of the poor. Here, if nowhere else, surely the only good taste is simplicity and truth.

Some days are especially sacred to the adornment of the graves of the departed. The anniversary of the death usually brings its tribute of affectionate recollection to the separate mounds; but Easter Day, with its message of hope, is generally marked by a special offering laid on many of them. Whit Sunday is also sometimes similarly observed, and sixty years ago at Farndop, Cheshire, it was the rule on this festival to cover the graves with rushes neatly arranged and with flowers. In South Wales, Palm Sunday is called Flowering Sunday, from the fact that the graves are adorned with fresh flowers on that day; the same custom obtains in Shropshire. On the Continent, All Souls' Day (November 2nd) finds almost every grave in the cemeteries watched and tended by some tearful mourner; but though that solemn day is increasingly regarded in England, devotion has not yet turned largely in this direction upon its recurrence.

Other ways of adorning a grave or a tomb, beside the

HERSE AT MARMION TOMB, TANSFIELD.

simple array of flowers, were formerly known. Among these we must mention the *herse*, or hearse; a wooden structure consisting of pillars crossed by bars, and surmounted by an open gabled roof, sconces for candles being provided at various points of it. This, which the French call a *chapelle ardente*, and we of to-day, adopting the Italian term, a *catafalque*, was placed over the tomb in the church, and sometimes over the grave in the open churchyard, and kept there for a longer or shorter period. This hearse was draped in black, candles were kept burning on it at intervals during its continuance in use, and sometimes an effigy of the dead lay beneath it. There are traditions of its use at S. Chad's, Shrewsbury, and at Lichfield; and at Tansfield, near Ripon, one may still be seen over the tomb of Sir Robert Marmion and his wife. This is of wrought iron with sconces for seven candles. The hearses of wealthy, and especially of royal personages, were often very ornate. Queen Mary's hearse was ornamented with wax angels; Inigo Jones designed the one used at the funeral of James I., which was covered with small flags, and included emblematic statues. The last used in England was that of Queen Mary II. in 1694. Over or upon these hearses laudatory verses were often affixed, and the escutcheons and accoutrements of knights were hung. The lines of Ben Jonson on the death of the Countess of Pembroke are well known; they commence:—

> "Underneath this sable herse,
> Lies the subject of all verse."

Laertes ("Hamlet," Act iv., 5) speaking of his father's murder, complains of

> "His means of death, his obscure burial,—
> No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones."

Other ways of adorning the hearse are alluded to in the following two passages; Habingdon, in his "Castara," has the lines

> "Lily, rose, and violet,
> Shall the perfumed hearse beset;"

and Dryden, in his *Marriage à la Mode* (Act ii., 1) makes one of his characters say,

> "Maidens, when I die,
> Upon my hearse white true-love knots should tie."

From the year 1666 to 1814 it was illegal to clothe any body for burial in anything not manufactured of wool; but the Act enforcing this was disregarded for a considerable part of that time. The first law on the matter, passed in the first-named year, proved so ineffective that a second was enacted in 1678. Under this it was decreed that "Noe corpse of any person or persons shall be buried in any Shirt, Shift, Sheete, or Shroud, or any thing whatsoever made or mingled with Flax, Hempe, Silke, Haire, Gold, or Silver, or any Stuffe or thing other than what is made of Sheep's Wooll onely, or be put in any coffin lined or faced with any sort of Cloath or Stuffe or any thing whatsoever that is made of any Materiall but Sheep's Wooll onely, upon paine of the forfeiture of five pounds of lawfull money of England." To ensure obedience to this statute, which was passed in aid of the woollen manufacture of the country, it was provided that an affidavit should be made in each case before a justice of the peace, or some other authorised person, and that a register of the fact that all had been done as required should be kept by the parish priest. The parish registers of that, and the following, century have

frequent notes in accordance with this law. Thus at Newburn-on-Tyne we find this entry :—

> "1687, 18. Aug. Cuthbert Longbridge was buried in woollen, as by a certificate dated 24. Aug. 1687."

Sometimes the raw material was used, as in a case registered at Lamesley, Durham, where we read,

> "1678. Anne Marley wrapped in sheep's skin, bur."

The lines in which Pope refers to this custom (alluding, it is generally supposed, to the death of Mrs. Oldfield, the actress) have been often quoted :—

> "Odious! in woollen! 'twould a saint provoke.
> (Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke):
> No, let the charming chintz, and Brussels lace
> Wrap my cold limbs, and shade my lifeless face."

The registers also contain notices of instances where, from neglect, or in the cases of wealthy persons from choice, the law was ignored and the penalty paid. At Witney, Oxfordshire, the following entries have been made: "Sent out a Note that no certificate had been brought to me concerning Baker's daughter being in Burying Clothes made of Sheepswoole only, which Note He delivered to David Flexyn, Overseer of the Poor"; and again in 1689-90, "Buried ye honourable Richd Lord Viscount Wenman; the 31st I sent a Note to ye Churchwardens that I understood the Body of sd. Lord Wenman was wrapt up in Burying Cloths not made of Sheepswool only, and they rec^{d} two pounds and ten shillings being the forfeiture to the Poor of the Parish according to the Woollen Act."

The Act was never so universally obeyed as to establish a custom; some families were willing to pay the penalty in order to wrap their deceased relatives in linen, according to

the older usage; and gradually the insistence upon conformity relaxed, so that long ere the repeal of the statute in 1814 it had practically been in abeyance.

It was sometimes customary to inter the body clothed as in life. Friar Lawrence ("Romeo and Juliet," Act iv., 5) says of Juliet,

> "As the custom is,
> In all her best array bear her to church";

such is still the usage in France; and ecclesiastics and the "religious" have generally been interred in their habits or vestments.

To "pay the last mark of respect" to a deceased neighbour (as attendance at his funeral is conventionally termed) is a duty highly considered, especially in country places. Of old it was common to send the bellman round to give public notice, that all who would might be present. At Barnard Castle, Durham, a funeral in the forenoon used to be looked upon as a private function, and no one presumed to attend but those who were specially invited; in the afternoon, however, it was a different matter, and all who could, especially the women, made a point of being present. The concourse of people at a Manx funeral was frequently very great; "the people of this Island," says an account of Man at the end of the eighteenth century, "(I mean the country farmers and their good wives, together with many handicraft people) esteem a funeral attendance as one of their very first entertainments."

The bearers, who carry the coffin from the church gate into the church, and again thence to the grave, are chosen according to the sex and age of the deceased; men carrying a man, women a woman, and so forth. White scarves and

gloves are usually worn by them for a child's funeral; and in the case of a young girl, her companions, who perform this last office for her, often wear white hoods. These old customs were at one time almost universal, but are now dying out rapidly in towns. It is to be hoped that the country will long keep the good old fashion of utilizing the willing service of friends for this sad rite, rather than the hired assistance of "undertakers' men."

Both friends and bearers at the stately obsequies of pre-Reformation days bore torches and tapers; at the funeral of King Henry V. at Westminster it is said that no less than 1,400 lights were carried; at the funeral of Sir John Gresham in 1556 there were "four dozen of great staff torches, and a dozen of great long torches." M. Jorevin de Rocheford, already quoted, whose account refers to the year 1672, speaks of flambeaux carried at a nobleman's funeral. In state obsequies this striking custom survived down to the end of the last century at least. The following is part of a contemporary account of the ceremonial at the funeral of George II. at Westminster Abbey in 1760: "At the entrance within the church, the Dean and Prebendaries in their copes, attended by the choir, all having wax tapers in their hands, are to receive the royal body, and are to fall into the procession just before the Clarenceux King of Arms, and are so to proceed singing." It was probably this practice that suggested the Welsh superstition of the corpse-candle, a mysterious light that travels along the path which the next funeral is to take. Sometimes a skull accompanies the light, sometimes the apparition of the person who is to die carries it, occasionally the mourners are seen to follow: it passes into the church, and then hovers above the place where the

grave will be. One tradition has it that this appearance was granted to the diocese of S. David, in answer to his prayer that his people might have evidence of the unseen world.

An old fancy prevalent in Yorkshire was that the funeral on coming to the churchyard must on no account go "against the sun"; and consequently the procession would sometimes go right round the church to get to the door, rather than take the more direct and usual path. Pennant says that at Skyv'og, in North Wales, the bearers would bring the corpse into the churchyard by no "other way than the south gate." Both usages probably have some connection with the sun-worship of our Celtic forebears.

Pennant, again, in the passage just quoted, alleges that in that parish the service in the church consisted of the form of evening prayer followed by the office for the burial of the dead. This usage seems to have been unique. The service itself is for the most part singularly free from local peculiarities in its details, and varies little, beyond the occasional introduction of hymns in church or at the grave-side. This is in accordance with ancient custom, which has employed music in the mortuary offices in almost all lands. Using Shakespeare's words ("Cymbeline," Act iv., 2), it seems to follow naturally on the death of man to "sing him to the ground."

From the church the body is carried feet foremost to its "long home," an attitude that strikes Sir Thomas Browne as "consonant to reason, as contrary to the native posture of man, and his first production into the world"; and which is thus referred to in an epigram of the time of James I. :—

"Nature, which headlong into life did throng us,
With our feet foremost to our grave doth bring us;
What is less ours than this our borrowed breath?
We stumble into life, we goe to death."

That impressive detail of the burial ceremony, the scattering of earth upon the coffin, was formerly performed by the priest himself. In the first Prayer-book of King Edward VI., the rubric ran, "Then the priest casting earth upon the corpse, shall say." In the second book this was altered to "Then while the earth shall be cast upon the body by some standing by, the priest shall say;" and so the words remain in the present book. The earlier rubric is more in accord with ancient precedent, which receives an illustration from the words of Shakespeare's Shepherd in "The Winter's Tale" (Act iv., 3),—

"Some hangman must put on my shroud, and lay me
Where no priest shovels in dust."

There is a north country superstition that if one standing at a considerable distance from the grave hears the fall of the earth upon the coffin, it is a sign to him of a death in his family. Browne, in his "Hydriotaphia," sees in the threefold throwing of the earth something of a parallel to the thrice-uttered valediction to the dead among the ancients.

An idea was prevalent not long ago in Cornwall that a sore might be cured by passing the hand of a dead body over it, and then dropping the bandage which wrapped it into the grave, during the reading of the burial service; but there is no virtue in the hand of a relative.

The exhumation of a body is held in many places (as in Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, and in other counties) to be in the highest degree unlucky for the family of the

deceased. Every effort, it is said, was made to dissuade King James I. from removing the body of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, from her first grave, on the plea that evil would result from such an act. James's eldest son, Henry, died soon after, and the subsequent history of the Stuarts was certainly unhappy enough. To disturb human remains, even accidentally, is thought in the Isle of Man to be ominous. When, some years since, alterations were being made in the interior of the church at Manghold, some bones were uncovered; and the building was filled with mysterious murmurings and whisperings; which, however, were lulled once more to silence by the reverend haste with which the bones were again buried.

There are quaint stories told of several grave-stones in different parts of the country. In Tettenhall churchyard, Staffordshire, is a worn stone on which is carved a figure resembling a head and body without limbs. Here, the local chroniclers relate, lies a woman who persisted in spinning on Sunday. Having been severely reproved by her neighbours, she promised to reform, and impiously wished that, if she broke her promise, "her arms and legs might drop off." Old habits proved too strong for her; and one Sunday she turned again to her wheel, and set it murmuring through the room, while she spun the twirling threads,—when lo! her horrible wish was fulfilled, and she was in a moment reduced to helplessness. In the cathedral garth at Durham is the effigy of a man holding a glove in one hand. This is variously said to represent "Hubbapella," the steward at the time of the erection of the abbey, whose glove was nightly filled with money by a miracle, so that he might pay for the next day's work; and that of a man who leapt from

the tower for a purse of gold, which he is supposed here to hold. In Wickhampton Church, Norfolk, is the tomb of Sir W. Gerbrygge and his wife, whose effigies lie upon it as if in prayer, holding in their hands two oval pieces of stone. The story here is, that these are two brothers, who, having quarrelled over the boundaries of their respective lands, fought until they tore each other's hearts out; and were then turned to stone with the hearts in their hands, as a warning to future ages! All these stories illustrate the tendency of the rustic mind to explain everything about him "somehow"; let a stone be never so quaintly carved, or strangely placed, let it be the despair of antiquaries, and its inscription be a standing puzzle to the scholar, yet the local folk will see no difficulty, but will have some legend ready to hand which will fully account for everything.

The subject of epitaphs is far too great to be treated here. In their composition, or their selection, every characteristic of the human mind has been displayed. We have poetry and bathos, dignified and appropriate sentiment, and foolish, ill-timed jests, reverent devotion and thoughtless ignorance, pride, envy, love, malice,—every phase of expression and of feeling. Let two examples alone suffice, the one remarkable for its brevity, and the other interesting from its literary associations. In the cloister at Worcester lies the non-juror Morris, in whose eyes the nation had departed from the truth, and wandered into hopeless error both in Church and State. Over his remains is a nameless slab, inscribed with but one pathetic word,

"MISERRIMUS."

In the churchyard at Bowes, in Yorkshire,—a parish within the district in which Sir Walter Scott lays the action of

"Rokeby," and in which also Charles Dickens discovered "Dotheboys Hall,"—is a tombstone commemorating the unhappy pair whom Mallet has immortalized as "Edwin and Emma." The stone was erected in 1848 at the cost of the late Dr. Dinsdale, and bears the following inscription :—

"Roger Wrightson, Jun., and Martha Railton, both of Bowes. Buried in one grave. He died in a fever, and upon tolling his passing bell, she cry'd out, My heart is broke, and in a Few hours expired purely thro' Love. March 15, $17\frac{14}{15}$.

Such is the brief and touching record
Contained in the Parish Register of Burials.
It has been handed down
By unvarying tradition that the grave
Was at the West end of the church,
Directly beneath the bells.
The sad history of these true and
Faithful lovers forms the subject of
Mallet's pathetic Ballad of
'Edwin and Emma.'"

CHAPTER VI.

The Nave.

THE idea of likening the Church of Christ to a ship voyaging across a stormy sea is very ancient, and perhaps arose from S. Peter's use of the ark of Noah as an emblem. In his first Epistle (iii., 20-21), he speaks of "the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight, souls were saved by water; the like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us"; and to this passage there is an obvious allusion in a collect in the Baptismal Office of the English Church which prays for the admission of the neophyte "into the ark of Christ's Church." The transference of the thought to the material building is a simple act, which early occurred. In the "Apostolical Constitutions"—a work of debated age, but almost certainly earlier than the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.—the reference of the figure both to the body of the faithful and to the place of their worship is found in the same passage. In the fifty-seventh chapter we read of the bishop as "one that is commander of a great ship"; he is bidden to see that the building "be long . . . and so it will be like a ship," and the deacons are to attend him "in close and small girt garments, for they are like the mariners and managers of the ship"; and again, "if anyone be found sitting out of his place let him be rebuked by the deacon, as a manager of the foreship."

This piece of symbolism has become stereotyped in more than one language by the use of some term meaning *ship* for the larger part of the church, occupied by the laity. It is thus that we get the word *nave*, from the Latin *navis*. The use of the emblem has been pushed to an extreme in the case of the church of Ss. Vincent and Anastasius at Rome, where the walls are curved like the hull of a vessel; and at Payerne, where is a nave of uneven width, typifying, it is said, a ship beaten by the wave.

Anciently the floors of our churches were often unpaved, or only paved roughly; and even where they were covered with stones or tiles, they were exceedingly cold to the feet, carpets and matting being almost unknown. The floors of private houses were strewn with rushes, a custom illustrated by a manuscript, "History of a moste horrible Murder comyttyd at Fevershame in Kente," in the days of King Edward VI.; wherein we are told that, after the crime, the miscreants "toke a clowt and wyped where it was blowdy, and strewyd agayne y^{e} rushes that were shuffled wth strugglinge"; and, further, the body being subsequently found in a field, but with rushes "stickynge in his slippars," it was concluded that he had been slain within a house. Very naturally, therefore, this custom was transferred to the church; so that Thomas Newton, in his "Herball to the Bible" (published in 1587), speaks of "Sedge and rushes, with the which many in the country do use in summer time to strawe their parlors and churches, as well for cooleness as for pleasant smell."

The provision of the needful supply of rushes was accompanied with no little ceremony, and generally took place at the dedication festival of the church. The

parishioners went forth in a goodly company to cut the rushes; and having done this, piled them on a cart adorned with ribbons, flowers, and coloured papers cut into patterns. Accompanied with music and singing, and cheered by the pealing of bells, the load was brought in triumph to the church; here the rushes were deposited, and the people filled up the day with feasting and merriment. In his Injunctions to the laity of the Province of York, issued about 1571, Archbishop Grindal orders "That no . . . minstrels, morrice-dancers, or others, at rush-bearings, or at any other times, come unreverently into any church, or chapel, or churchyard." The custom, without (let us hope) any such irregular accompaniment, has survived to our own day in some few places, as at Ambleside, and until recently in several other parishes in the Lake district and other remote spots.

Churchwardens' accounts frequently allude to this method of covering the floor. In the parish of S. Mary-at-Hill, London, the sum of fourpence was paid in 1504 "for 2 Berden Rysshes for the strewing the newe pewes"; at S. Margaret's, Westminster, 1s. 5d. was disbursed for rushes in 1544; and at S. Laurence's, Reading, there is an entry, dated 1602, "Paid for flowers and rushes for the churche when the Queen was in town, xxd." Rushes, although evidently so much the most common as to be the typical covering for the church floor, were, nevertheless, not the only things employed for the purpose, local circumstances, doubtless, often rendering a substitute more easy to procure. Thus at Norwich we find that pea-straw was sometimes used; at Old Weston, Huntingdonshire, a piece of land belongs to the parish clerk, on condition of its being mown before the

local feast in July, and the grass strewn on the church floor; grass was also used at Pavenham, Bedfordshire, where the churchwardens claimed, until the demand was commuted for a money payment, as much grass as could be cut and carted away from a certain field between sunrise and sunset. Sometimes the covering appears to have been varied according as the season made the cooling or the warming of the feet of the worshippers desirable; at Deptford, for example, a sum of money was left to the parish to provide, among other things, half a load of rushes for the church at Whitsuntide, and a load of pea-straw at Christmas. This is not the only bequest of this nature, and occasionally a land-tenure has taken this form; a small farm in the Isle of Man, for instance, being held by this service, the owner having to supply the neighbouring church with rushes.

Little or no provision was made in early times for seating the congregation. Sermons did not then fill the large part of the public service which they afterwards came to do in some places, and the scriptural lections were short; consequently the people were expected to stand or kneel almost all the time. Occasionally, as at Bottesford, stone seats were provided running round the pillars, or in the recesses of the walls; but these would accommodate so few, that only the aged and the infirm would be likely to use them. Nevertheless open benches were sometimes placed in churches long before the Reformation. At a synod held at Exeter, in 1287, it was decreed as follows: "We have heard also that the inhabitants of parishes repeatedly quarrel about seats in a church, two or more persons laying claim to one seat, which is a cause of much scandal, and often produces an interruption in the service; we decree that no

PEW, WENSLEY CHURCH.

person shall for the future be able to claim any seat as his own, with the exception of noblemen and the patrons of the churches; but that if a person shall first enter a church to pray there, he may choose whatever place he will." Coming down to Reformation times, we find John Bradford, in a letter dated 1553, speaking of some who so far conformed as to hear mass, but were accustomed instead of worshipping to "sit still in their pews." Stubs also, in his "Anatomie of Abuses" (published in 1585), tells how morris-dancers sometimes invaded churches during divine service, and that at their coming the congregation "mount upon the formes and pewes to see these goodly pageants." There are examples of ancient carved benches in the churches of Caxton, Finedon, Nettlecombe, Talland, Lavenham, Shellesley, Walsh, Long Melford, and Langley Marsh. The oldest dated instance that we have is at Geddington, where in the north aisle is a bench on which is carved—

Churchwardens	William Thorn.
	John Wilkie.
Minister	Thomas Jones. 1602.

The bench-ends were often elaborately and handsomely carved. At Lew Trenchard are several of this kind; on one is the figure of S. Michael weighing souls, another has the portrait of a lady with a jester in cap and bells beneath, and a third the effigy of a man, with an embattled gateway beneath; others have shields charged with the instruments of the Passion. Cornwall is especially rich in this form of decoration. The bench-ends of the county, made usually of chestnut, are frequently panelled in a design like a traceried window, and the panels are further enriched with devices. The emblems of saints are often represented, as the wheel

of S. Catherine at Poughill. Coats-of-arms and designs typical of various industries probably commemorate the donors of the several pieces of work: at Mullion the anvil, bellows, and other requisites of the blacksmith are found; at Altarnun a number of sheep and rams; at Stratton a rudder; and in many places initial letters. Launcells has the various implements suggestive of the events of the first Holy Week; the thirty pieces of silver, the ewer, bason, and towel of the feet-washing, S. Peter's sword with the ear of Malchus beside it, and the more usual emblems, lantern, seamless robe, the cross, the sacred wounds, and so forth. Secular scenes are also sometimes found; Launcells has hunting scenes, Altarnun a sword-dance; and birds, beasts, and fishes are not of infrequent occurrence. At Zennor one of the bench-ends has the figure of a mermaid, "whereby," according to local tradition, "hangs a tale." Many, many years ago, so they say, a beautiful lady came to the church at Zennor, and sang so divinely as to enrapture all who heard; none saw whence she came, or whither she went, and although she appeared at intervals for several years, she never seemed to grow older. One young man, bolder than the rest, or more enchanted, at last followed her when she left the church one Sunday; but he never returned to tell his tale. Long after this a vessel sailed into Pendower Cove one Sunday, and cast anchor; when a lovely mermaid rose from the water, and politely asked the skipper to shift his mooring, as his cable barred the entrance to her dwelling. On the report of this incident reaching Zennor, it was at once felt that this must be the mysterious stranger who had beguiled the young man away. And here to this day is her effigy in the church. At Trull, in Somersetshire, is an

exceedingly interesting series of bench-ends, representing the procession to the altar before high mass. We have two acolytes bearing the cross, and a torch, followed by the three sacred ministers; all are vested in garments that are singularly short according to modern ideas, even the celebrant's alb (beneath which no cassock is visible) reaching but little below the knee.

It was not until the seventeenth century that pews became those monstrous and unsightly erections, from which the past half century has not entirely delivered us. The growth of the abomination is marked by some of the visitation enquiries of Wren, Bishop of Hereford, in 1635: "Are all the seats and pews," he asks, "so ordered, that they which are in them may kneel down in time of prayer, and have their faces up to the holy table?" And again, "Are there any privy closets or close pews in your church? Are any pews so loftily made that they do any way hinder the prospect of the church or chancel, so that they which be in them are hidden from the face of the congregation?"

These questions, taken in connection with the date at which they were put, indicate the reasons for which the high pews were formed. The almost interminable sermons which began to be the fashion among clergy of Puritan leanings made something more restful than an open bench practically needful for the hearers; and the spread of the same Puritanical opinions among the people helped to raise the backs and sides of these seats to an absurd height. For since it was part of the theory of Puritanism that liturgical offices were of little worth, and that bowing at the Holy Name, standing at the *Gloria Patri*, and other similar marks of decent behaviour, were all papistical, and therefore

to be abhorred; it was convenient for such as did not care to incur the penalties of habitual absence from church, to be able at least to conceal their irreverence when there. This is illustrated by a letter from Dr. John Andrewes, rector of Beaconsfield in the days of Charles I., in which he describes the ill-behaviour of his parishioners; and, among other offences charged against them, he says, "Many sitt at Divine Service with their Hatts on; and some lye along in their Pewes, their heades covered, and even at the Letany and the Ten Com^ts^, and yet *Omnia bene.* Many do not kneel at prayers; nor bow at the Glorious Name of our Lord Jesus, nor stand up at the Creeds, nor at the Gloria Patri, and yet *Omnia bene.*" The sarcastic refrain of the rector is in allusion to the report of his churchwardens, who at visitations make oath that "all is well."

This, together with the growth of the custom of allocating pews for the exclusive use of certain persons, led to the filling of our churches with the ugly and irregular erections, with which most of us were more or less familiar in our younger days. The effect of this upon the appearance of a church is indicated by White in his account of the church at Selborne. "Nothing," he says, "can be more irregular than the pews of this church, which are of all dimensions and heights, being patched up according to the fancy of the owners; but whoever nicely examines them will find that the middle aisle had on each side a regular row of benches of solid oak, with a low back-board to each; these we should not hesitate to say are coeval with the present church (about the time of Henry VII.). . . . The fourth aisle also has a row of these benches; but some are decayed through age, and the rest much disguised by modern alterations."

In process of time the evil grew to an almost ludicrous extent in some churches. The pew of a wealthy family was often allowed to occupy the space that would have sufficed for a dozen benches, and was furnished more like a parlour than a place of prayer. So early as the first half of the sixteenth century, Corbet, who became Bishop of Norwich in 1632, speaks of pews having "become tabernacles with rings and curtains, casements, locks and keys, and cushions"; and he sarcastically suggests that only pillows and bolsters are needed to complete the furnishing. One or two examples of the pew of this kind are still left. At Breedon-on-the-Hill, Leicester, is one belonging to the Earl of Ferrers; it is finely carved and surmounted by large escutcheons. Wensley Church, Yorkshire, has another, the property of the Lords of Bolton; the screen in this case is said to have been plundered from the Scrope Chantry of Easby Abbey, near Richmond.

Before leaving the question of pews, mention should be made of the "Hall dog pew,"—the special compartment provided for the Squire's dogs during service-time. This, though not universally, was yet frequently, found; at Aveley, in Essex, it was used down to the end of the eighteenth century, and at Northorpe, Lincolnshire, in the early years of the present one. There are many references in the writings of past days to the fact that favourite creatures, dogs and birds especially, were commonly taken to church by their masters. In Barclay's "Shippe of Fooles" (published in 1509) occur these verses:—

"Into the church there comes another sotte,
Without devotion jetting up and downe,
Or to be seene, and to shew his garded cote;

Another on his fiste a sparhawke or fawcone
Or else a cokow, so wasting his shoon,
Before the aultar he to and fro doth wander,
With even so great devotion as a gander.

One time the hawkes bells jangleth hye,
Another time they flutter with their wings,
And now the houndes barking strikes the skye,
Nowe sounde their feete, and now the chaynes ringes,
They clap with their handes; by such manner of things
They make of the church for their hawkes a mewe,
And canell for their dogges, which they shall after rewe."

In "Historical Notices of the Reign of Charles I.," by Nehemiah Wallington, are two stories of thunder-storms, at times when the people were in church. In the one we are told that, at Widdecombe, Devonshire, on October 21st, 1638, "a dog near the chancel door was whirled up three times and fell down dead;" and in the other, that at S. Anthony, Cornwall, on Whit Sunday, 1648, the lightning killed "one dog in the belfry and another at the feet of one kneeling to receive the cup" at the Eucharist.

The whole question of the propriety and legality of allowing a section of the parishioners to acquire the possession of the seats of the church, which is the common property of all, has often been discussed in recent years; but happily the need for the discussion grows less year by year, as pews of the old type, and even benches allotted to specified persons become more rare. It would be somewhat beyond our province to devote any space here to such matters as legal faculties for pews, the churchwardens' authority in their allotment, and other kindred subjects.

One evil, which is also passing away, but which for a long time marred or hid the architectural beauties of many a church, is due to the pew-system. When a few wealthy

families occupied the greater part of the floor of the church with their wide enclosures, it became needful to find room elsewhere for folk of less importance; and the gallery, with its hideous straight front, came into being. Western galleries sometimes existed before this time, and were used for the singers, or the minstrels; and in cruciform churches one of the transepts occasionally had a gallery. There is an ancient western one at Worsted, in Norfolk, and they are not uncommon on the Continent; and Winchester Cathedral and Hexham Abbey have examples in the transepts. The gallery was of old called sometimes a loft, and by Bishop Montague of Bath and Wells (1608-1616) a scaffold. A century or more ago, in their desire to increase the accommodation of their churches without interfering with the all too ample proportions of the family pews, the authorities reared galleries with a reckless disregard for the beauty, and sometimes even for the stability of the buildings. Arches were hidden, windows obscured or bricked up, columns called upon to bear additional, perhaps dangerous, weights; and all that the congregation in the nave might loll at irreverent ease. Happily this is now a thing of the past; with the re-introduction of open benches, the need for these abominations in most places has gone, and they are consequently rapidly disappearing.

The separation of the congregation according to sex is a very ancient arrangement. A rule given in the "Apostolical Constitutions" runs, "Let the door-keepers stand at the gate of the men, and the deaconesses at the gate of the women." S. Cyril, S. Augustine of Hippo, and other early writers, refer to the practice. Socrates asserts that S. Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, "always

behaved submissively in this respect, praying in the women's part with the women." In S. Chrysostom's days, as appears from one of his homilies, a wooden partition divided the men from the women, although he admits that such was not a primitive custom. Eusebius alleges that the practice of dividing the sexes is as old as the time of S. Mark; some consider it even an inheritance from Jewish usage. The women's side was commonly the north, the men's the south; but in the East the women often sat in galleries above the men. In art the Blessed Virgin is always placed at the right hand of her Crucified Son, and S. John at His left; thus the figure of the Mother on the rood-screen is on the north, that of the Apostle on the south. Whether this has had anything to do with the respective positions of men and women in church, it would be impossible to say, probably, with any certainty; but the coincidence is worth noting. The Prayer-book of 1549 has an allusion to this custom; in the office for "The Supper of the Lord and Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass," is a rubric which orders that "so many as shall be partakers of the holy communion shall tarry still in the quire, or in some convenient place nigh the quire, the men on the one side, and the women on the other side." This direction was observed at the cathedrals of Hereford and Durham, so far as the seating of any of the public within the choir was concerned, until comparatively recent times. The usage, as a standing rule of the place, has been revived in many churches.*

The conduct of the congregations of the past would strike a modern worshipper as very strange in at least one particular.

* Thirty years ago, and probably still, the sexes were always divided in the "free seats" of Wesleyan Methodist chapels in Cornwall.

It was usual apparently at the end of the Middle Ages for men to keep their hats on their heads in church. In 1556 Cardinal Pole had specially to order the "veiling of bonnets" at Hereford, even at the *Incarnatus* in the Nicene Creed; and at the funeral of Bishop Cox in Ely Cathedral in 1581 the people sat, "having their bonets on," during a sermon. A sermon preached by the Rev. James Rowlandson at Southampton, in 1620, alleges that this was a foreign habit: "How unmannerly," exclaimed the preacher, "are a many that carry themselves with more lowliness in a Gentleman's Hall (for there they will uncover) than in the House of God! A French fashion, indeed, but very ill-favoured, though it be naturalized amongst the most, and grown English even in our greatest congregations, where the apprentice that stands bare-headed all the week long in his master's shop, must needs have his hat on in the church." Archbishop Laud did his utmost to abolish the irreverent custom, but it lingered on in places for fully half-a-century more. William III. had a habit of covering during the sermon, and sometimes even at the prayers; but the usage had then so far died out, that the royal example, instead of leading to a revival of it, caused much offence. With the Puritans, and especially the early Quakers, this practice was elevated almost into a principle, as exhibiting to the full their contempt for all outward forms and ceremonies.

Custom does not seem to have prescribed any laws for the dress of the congregation in England, as is the case in some parts of the Continent; as, for example, in Malta, where, howsoever gaily the ladies may array themselves at other times, a studiously grave attire is assumed for church. In the Scilly Isles, however, it was usual at the beginning of

this century for girls to wear white only on Christmas Day; and it is a common superstition that one must wear something new, it matters not what, on Easter Day.

Although, as we have seen, the dogs from the Hall occasionally had a pew specially set apart for them, such was not the universal practice; and at any rate dogs of meaner ownership had to be excluded; the services of the dog-whipper were therefore called into play. In the cathedrals of S. David's and Durham this was a recognized officer of the foundation, and we find traces of him elsewhere. A memorandum of 1585 refers to this official at Ecclesfield, where he was known as the *Dog Noper*. The churchwardens' accounts for Stamford-in-the-Vale, Oxfordshire, for 1567, have an entry: "To Olyu^{r} for whipping dogges from ye churche xviiij$^{d.}$" Similarly at Tavistock we read, "For whyppyng dogs owt of the churche, iiij$^{d.}$" The accounts of East Halton, Lincolnshire, have an entry of the same kind. An endowment for a dog-whipper for Calverley, in Shropshire, was made by deed in 1659; and the tenant of certain lands at Christel, Kent, pays (or as lately as 1842 paid) ten shillings a year to a man to keep order in church, his original duties being clearly shown by the fact that the land is still called Dog Whipper's Marsh. In the vestry of Baslow Church, Derbyshire, the whip used by the local officer, a short ash stick, with a stout lash three feet long, is preserved; and at Clynnog Fawr and Llanynys, North Wales, are kept instruments once used to capture dogs in the church. They resemble long tongs, of iron, with short spikes within the extremities, wherewith to get a grip on the unlucky animals. Trysull, Staffordshire, had a pound per annum bequeathed to it in 1725 by John Rudge to pay a

man to drive dogs out of church, and to go round during the sermon and wake up all sleepers. In a similar spirit the sum of five shillings per annum was left to the Collegiate Church of Wolverhampton by Richard Brooke, to secure the services of a man who should keep all the boys quiet during divine service. In the Isle of Man part of the Sumner's duty was to stand at the chancel door "at the time of service, to whip and beat all the dogs."

Almost the only links left us now between the corporate life of our towns and the church, which, by means of the ancient gilds, were once so closely knit together, are the official attendances of our civic authorities at church on important occasions. The mayor, escorted by a more or less full muster of the aldermen and councillors, is usually present on the Sunday morning after his formal installation; and in the days before the reform of our municipal corporations, the procession made a brave show. At Norwich the mayor went in state to the cathedral on S. George's Day, and on the Eve of S. John, on which occasions his retinue included, beside the members of the council in their gowns, the city waits, swordsmen, marshals, the city sword-bearer, the mace-bearer, and the standards, one of blue and gold, the other of crimson and gold: and before all went the "Norwich Snap," the famous dragon of the city pageant. The Lord Mayor of London anciently attended Evensong at S. Paul's on All Saints' Day, and at Christmas, Epiphany, and the Purification; he still makes an official attendance there and at other important city churches at sundry times during his year of office; as, for example, on S. Matthew's Day, when he is present at the Chapel of Christ's Hospital. The amount of state which their worships should assume on

these occasions has more than once led to disagreements between them and the ecclesiastical authorities; the point in dispute usually being the right to carry the civic sword through the church. This was the case more than once at Exeter, and also at Chichester; at Bristol the mayor put up a gallery for his own accommodation, which Bishop Thornborough (1603-1617) very properly had pulled down again; whereupon his worship took himself off in high dudgeon to S. Mary Redcliffe. The bailiffs, who, before the Municipal Reform Act of 1835, held sway in many places, had also their official attendances at the parish church; at Wem, in Shropshire, the bailiffs and past-bailiffs went thither in procession at the great festivals, Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, and Whit Sunday. Her Majesty's Judges generally make a state "progress" to church also on the Assize Sunday, and in some places, notably in Durham, this is accompanied with no little old-fashioned pomp.

As we have seen was the case with the churchyard, so also with the church, there was at one time considerable liberty taken as to conduct therein; but a clear distinction seems to have been made in pre-Reformation days between the chancel and the nave. The former, usually guarded by its screen, was kept rigidly for its high and holy purposes; the latter was at times the common place for the parishioners to meet in; and the liberty thus allowed ran in many cases, according to the tendency of human nature, into license. Booths were at one time erected in Ely Cathedral, where S. Audrey's laces, made of thin silk, were sold.* Barnabe

* From the gaudy, showy, character of these laces sold at S. Etheldreda's, or Audry's, fair we derive the word *tawdry*.

From a Photo by] EXETER CATHEDRAL—WEST FRONT. *[the Photochrom Co.*

Googe, in his "Popish Kingdom," speaks of a similar custom as being common on S. Ulrick's Day (July 4th):

> "Wheresoever Huldryche hath his place, the people there bring in
> Bothe carpes and pykes and mullets fat, his favour here to win;
> Amid the church there sitteth one and to the aultar nie,
> That selleth fish and so good cheep that every man may bie."

Nor was the abuse of the House of Prayer confined to its use as a place of merchandise. Aubrey, writing in 1686, says it was anciently the custom in Yorkshire, in the Christmas holidays, to dance in the church after prayers, crying or singing, "Yole, Yole, Yole." This looks like a relic of one of those sacred dances once employed in various places, of which very obvious relics yet survive in Spain, and in the Spanish-American countries of South America. In 1637 the parishioners of Clungunford, Shropshire, presented a petition to Archbishop Laud, complaining that the parson of the parish declined to allow them an Easter feast, which had become traditional among them. They set forth that the old and poor folk of their scattered parish had been used, for many ages, to be regaled with bread, cheese, and beer, after evensong on Easter Day, having first communicated at the celebration of the Eucharist that morning; that for some fifty years, in accordance with the wish of the Archbishop of that day, the feast had taken place in the parsonage, but that previously it had been held in the church; now, however, it was discontinued altogether. Laud's comment on the petition, still extant in his own writing, was as follows: "I shall not go about to break this custom, so it be done in the parsonage house, in a neighbourly and decent way, but I cannot approve of the continuance of it in the church; and

if I hear it be so done again, I will not fail to call the offenders into the High Commissioners' Court. June 27th, 1637. W. Cant." The practice was not confined to that one parish; in the same county, in the parish of Berrington, a similar feast was held; a document, dated August 22nd, 1639, and signed by Wright, Bishop of Lichfield, attesting that it had been so accustomed "tyme out of mynd," and that the "feast was even yet performed in the Church." In this case also Wright, like Laud, encouraged the continuance of the usage, but forbade its taking place on holy ground. Still worse than this was the presence, now and again, of actual profanity, as when women were found singing ribald songs in procession within the cathedrals, as Sir Thomas More complains.

Naturally at the Reformation a good deal of this kind of indecency took place. The more extreme reformers, for whom the English Reformation was by no means sufficiently thorough, delighted in showing their contempt for all that others considered holy. Thus we find Hooper directing, at his visitation of the diocese of Gloucester in 1552, "that you do move the people committed to your charge . . . not to talk or walk in the time of sermon, communion, or common prayers; . . . that the churchwardens do not permit any buying, selling, gaming, outrageous noises, tumult, or any other idle occupying of youth, in the church, church porch, or churchyard, during the time of common prayer, sermon, or reading of the homily."

In partial explanation of these secular usages arising in earlier times, it should be pointed out that many of our churches, and even some of the cathedrals, were not

formally consecrated till long after their erection. In 1237, Cardinal Otho, acting as papal legate, found it needful to issue injunctions that all such should be consecrated within two years, under pain of interdict. In later times we can find no excuse except the secularity of the people, and the carelessness of too many of the clergy. Thus a public thoroughfare was suffered in several of the cathedrals; such was the case at Canterbury, Worcester, Durham, Norwich, Salisbury, and elsewhere, the market people freely carrying their wares to the Close, or to any place on that side of the church, through the cathedral and the cloisters. The most notorious of these cases was that of S. Paul's, "Paul's Walk" being for very many years a well-known public promenade. Complaints were made as early as the time of Edward III., and again under Richard III., of the resort of idlers to S. Paul's, and of the use of portions of the precincts by craftsmen and traders. Under Henry VIII. and Edward VI. the state of things got so bad, as to call for the passing of an Act in the reign of Mary to mend matters. From the terms of the statute it appears that not only were "beer, bread, fish, flesh, fardels of stuff, etc.," carried constantly through the cathedral, but a common passage was even claimed for mules, horses, and cattle generally. And there was no interruption of this traffic even during divine service; "yt is a greate disorder in the churche," says a presentment of the time of Elizabeth, under whom the old evils, if momentarily checked by this Act, had assumed full sway, "that porters, butchers, and water-bearers, and who not, be suffered (in special tyme of service) to carrye and recarrye whatsoever, no man withstandinge them or gainsaying them."

In his play "Every Man out of his Humour," Ben Jonson lays several scenes in S. Paul's, where a great variety of characters meet and walk and talk. Shakespeare also has an allusion to the practices here referred to; he makes Sir John Falstaff say of Bardolph, "I bought him in Paul's, and he'll buy me a horse in Smithfield." Servants were hired here, lawyers met their clients, and the young gallants lounged and chatted about the place. In the words of Corbet, Bishop of Norwich (1632-1635), it was—

"The walke,
Where all our Brittaine sinners sweare and talk."

These most objectionable practices were revived to some extent in the new S. Paul's, as is evident from the fact that another Act was passed in the reign of William and Mary against such offences, inflicting a penalty of twenty pounds upon the disorderly frequenters of the Church.

On one of the pillars of old S. Paul's was carved the foot of one Algar, a prebendary of the cathedral, and this served as a standard measure of land. A parallel to this may be quoted from Somersetshire. There was formerly kept in Puxton Church the chain by which certain common lands, called the East and West Dole Moors, were measured for allotment; this measure was four yards less than the regular land-measuring chain, and was annually tested on the Saturday after Midsummer Day, by stretching it from the foot of the chancel arch to the foot of the tower arch, at each of which places marks were cut for it.

A curious story of the experience of a congregation at Wells Cathedral is told by Isaac Casaubon. "This day," he says, "the Lord Bishop of Ely (Dr. L. Andrewes), a prelate of great piety and holiness, related to me a wonderful

thing. He said he had received the account from many hands, but chiefly from the Lord Bishop of Wells lately dead (Dr. J. Still), who was succeeded by the Lord Montacute; that in the city of Wells about fifteen years ago (1596), one summer's day, when the people were at divine service in the cathedral church, they heard, as it thundered, two or three claps above measure dreadful, so that the whole congregation, affected alike, threw themselves on their knees at this terrifying sound. It appeared the lightning fell at the same time, but without harm to any one; so far, then, there was nothing but what was common in like cases. The wonderful part was this, which afterwards was taken notice of by many, that the marks of a cross were found to be imprinted on the bodies of those who were then at divine service in the cathedral." The bishop himself found the mark upon him, and others were signed "on the shoulder, the breast, the back, and other parts." "This account," Casaubon adds, "that great man, my lord of Ely, gave me in such a manner as forbade me even to doubt of its truth."

Very different from the stories of frivolity and irreverence among the people, are those scenes witnessed within the naves of our churches when sinners have been put to open penance; and the accounts of some of these are exceedingly curious. It was anciently a rule at Exeter that any Vicar-Choral who showed disrespect to the Dean should stand during the offices of the canonical hours, for one day and night, outside the choir in the nave, immediately before the rood; but even penance did not invariably imply repentance, as was proved when a young monk at Durham, Robert de Stichill by name, seized the stool on which he had been compelled to sit in the midst of the choir one Sunday,

and hurled it into the nave among the congregation. We may hope, however, that the discipline, which, beyond question, followed this exhibition of temper, produced its proper effect, for in 1260 the same Robert became Bishop of Durham and Abbot of the monastery.

The practice of divination in some of its many forms led very frequently to a public abjuration and penance. Amongst the notes in the private book of Dr. Swift, who was Vicar General and Official Principal for the Diocese of Durham from 1561 to 1577, is one that refers to such a case; "A confession to be made by Allice Swan, wife of Robert Swan, in S. Nicole's Church at Newcastle, for turning the ridle and shears with certen others, after the minister upon Sonday after the sermon." The special method of divination employed by Dame Allice with her sieve and shears (or scissors) was one similar to the more familiar way of discovering some person's name by means of a key and a Bible. There are frequent allusions to the exercise of this discipline in the ecclesiastical records of the Isle of Man. At Kirk Michael, in 1712, Alice Knakill, *alias* Moor, was sentenced to do penance on three Sundays in the churches of the neighbourhood for using charms. In 1713 also Alice Cowley (the Alices appear to have been specially superstitious), who professed to have infallible love philtres, charms for increasing the yield of crops, and for other purposes, was sentenced to thirty days' imprisonment, subsequently to stand at the market cross of four market towns in Man, dressed in a white sheet, and bearing a white wand, with the words, "For charming and sorcery" on her breast, and finally to do penance in Ballaugh Church. In the same church two men and two

women did penance in white sheets not more than seventy years ago; and in Lezayre Church a similar penalty was exacted of a man in 1825. A severer punishment than merely exposing oneself to the contemptuous gaze of the congregation was sometimes inflicted; thus a law of 1655 enacted that, "If any servant hire more than twice (at a statute hiring) he shall be whipped at the parish church on Sunday." This law was only repealed in 1876, though long fallen into desuetude. Bishop Wilson tells us the usual manner of doing public penance in Man during his time, which lasted from 1697 to 1755: "The penitent," he says, "clothed in a sheet, etc., is brought into the church immediately before the Litany, and there continues until the sermon be ended; after which, and a proper exhortation, the congregation are desired to pray for him in a form provided for that purpose." Should one who had done penance thus relapse, and be again found guilty of any offence requiring discipline, he was not admitted to it until he had shown some signs of amendment and contrition; and meanwhile he was excluded from the church altogether, but had to stand at the door during the time of service.

There is a curious entry in the Manx Exchequer Book of 1659 dealing with a case that, though scarcely one of penance, was very similar. It seems that Mistress Jane Cesar was accused of witchcraft, was duly tried by a jury, and was "cleared and acquitted of the accusacon"; the document then goes on, "Nevertheless that the said Jane Cesar may declare her innocence of such practizes and that shee doth renounce the same as diabolicall and wicked, she is hereby ordered to acknowledge the same before the Congregacon off Kk. Malew Parish on the next Lord's day to the

end that others may be admonished." This seems hard measure to mete out to Jane Cesar, after her acquittal by the jury. In 1638 we read of a very useful piece of discipline inflicted on slanderers: certain people having accused Jony Tear of witchcraft, and the charge having been refuted, the slanderers had to ask Jony's forgiveness "before the congregation."

There are instances in England of the formal performance of penance within the present century. A gentleman in the early years of that period expiated a fault in this way at S. Mary's, Penzance, walking after the service from the church to his house in his white sheet.

In spite of all the efforts made from time to time to prevent the use of charms or the practice of divination, both continued to be held in some sort of estimation by the ignorant, who in past days constituted a great majority of the people; and the Church and its possessions were made to serve the purposes of the superstitious. Dust brought from the floor of the church to the bed of the dying was supposed to shorten and ease the pangs of a lingering death-struggle. At Lydford, in Devonshire, it was thought that a woman suffering from "breastills," or sore breasts, might be cured by wearing a heart made of lead cut in small pieces from the church windows: a form of medicine to which churchwardens might reasonably object. A somewhat elaborate cure for epilepsy was once believed in in Cornwall, the method being as follows: the person afflicted must stand at the church door and collect from members of the congregation of the opposite sex thirty pennies; these must then be changed for "sacrament money," that is for an equivalent in silver coins from those presented at the altar

during the Eucharist; and of this silver a ring must be made, the wearing of which will effectually cure fits. At S. Just-in-Penwith within the last twenty years some part of this charm was tried, the pence being collected and the ring bought, but the exchange for "sacrament money" was probably not effected. As dust, lead, stone, and other things taken from the church were supposed to carry a blessing with them, so also anything on which a curse had fallen was freed from it by being carried into the church. In Wales it was firmly held that if a spell or a curse had been laid upon a farm or a house, it could be broken by taking something belonging to it into the church. A charm of another kind comes from Devonshire; pluck a rose on Midsummer Day and put it away, and never look at it until Christmas Day; if thus treated it will keep perfectly fresh, and if worn to church on that day the future partner of your life will come and take the rose.

Somewhat akin to these fancies is much of the quaint weather lore, in which our ancestors had full confidence. Among other items of this kind it was thought very ominous for rain to fall before the morning service on Sunday. We find proverbs to that effect in very distant parts of the country. In Norfolk it is said,

> "Rain afore chu'ch,
> Rain all the week
> Little or much;"

while in Fife we find

> "If it rains on the Sunday before mess (mass)
> It will rain all the week more or less."

The naves of our churches were anciently adorned with permanent decorations far more frequently than is now the

case; paintings and statues at once serving to remove the bareness of the walls, and to instruct the worshippers. Over the chancel arch was usually a doom, or emblematic painting of the Last Judgment, of which traces still remain in several English churches. At Lutterworth, in the chapel of the Holy Cross at Stratford-on-Avon, at Blyth in Northamptonshire, and at South Leigh, dooms, more or less damaged by time and whitewash, still exist; and there is a singularly interesting one at Wenhaston, in Suffolk. Other paintings often covered the walls, and made them as full of teaching as we have at last agreed that our windows may be. Statues also stood in their niches against the pillars, or beside the lesser altars. The patron saint of England, S. George, was represented in many churches in a splendid fashion; an equestrian figure richly decorated being erected in his honour. The Puritan, Hollingworth, writing of Manchester in 1656, says, "In the chappell where morning sermons were wont to be preached, called St. George his Chappell, was the statua of St. George on horseback hanged up. His horse was lately in the sadler's shop. The statues of the Virgin Mary and St. Dyonise the patron saints were upon the highest pillars next to the quire. Unto them men did usually bow at their coming in the Church." Reading had a famous statue of S. George, which was lavishly decorated. The Reformers had a most illogical dislike to painting and sculpture; admitting, as Hooper does in his "Declaration of Christ and His Office," that "the art of graving and painting is the gift of God," they, nevertheless, would altogether exclude its existence from the House of God. Even painted windows were to be destroyed, and "if they will have anything painted," writes Hooper again, to the

clergy of Gloucester, "let it be either branches, flowers, or posies (mottoes) taken out of holy scripture"; he goes on to order the defacement of all "images painted upon any of the walls." Thenceforth, therefore, the only decoration to be suffered was branches of unmeaning foliage, or texts unreadable by the larger part of a country congregation at that time. Happily these narrow views had no authority beyond that of the individuals who expressed them, although the eighty-ninth canon of 1604 desires that "chosen sentences be written upon the walls of the churches and chapels in places convenient"; but the destruction which was commenced under such leadership was carried out with ruthless logic to its natural conclusions by the Puritans of the following century. Something has been done in recent years to repair the loss of the past centuries, but much yet remains to be done before the interiors of our churches will bear comparison with the artistic decoration that we at any rate aim at in our homes.

There was an interesting case, involving the question of the legality of pictures in churches, decided by the Court of Arches in 1684. It was proposed to put up at the east end of Moulton Church, Lincolnshire, paintings of the apostles, the dedication of the church being in the name of All Saints; and a faculty was applied for from the Chancellor of the diocese. The Surrogate of that official granted the faculty asked; the Chancellor himself revoked it, and the bishop, Dr. Thomas Barlow ("a thorough-paced Calvinist," according to Wood) refused his assent. An appeal was consequently taken to the Court of Arches, the leading opponent of the pictures being one Tallent, a clergyman living in the parish. The case was heard by the Dean,

Sir Richard Lloyd, and the following is an extract from his judgment. "By the opinion and judgment of all orthodox divines the painting of the effigies of the blest apostles in any church or chapel is not idolatrous or superstitious, but do serve only for ornament and to put people in remembrance of the holy lives and conversations of those they represent. . . . And, therefore, since there is no apparent danger of superstition, the effigies of the holy apostles in the parish church of Moulton aforesaid may and ought to continue as they are now painted; otherwise it may be of dangerous consequence, since that under such pretended fears of superstition and idolatry most of the churches, chapels, colleges, and other pious and religious places in England may be in danger of being pulled down and demolished, and so in all probability the hatred of idolatry would usher licentious sacrilege." The faculty was accordingly granted, and the opponents of it condemned in costs.

Not many of our churches have paintings by well-known artists, though there are exceptions. The celebrated picture of Christ as the "Light of the World," by Holman Hunt, is now in Keble College chapel; and in the parish church of Chinnor, Oxfordshire, are effigies of the eleven faithful Apostles, the four Evangelists, and of our Blessed Lord, said to be the work of Sir James Thornhill. The same artist executed paintings within the dome at S. Paul's, which have now been replaced by the more effective mosaics. Other cases might be quoted, but we are far behind the Continent in this respect, where the masterpieces of the greatest artists have been placed for the most part in the churches, and not in mere picture galleries, public or private.

One symbol only found full favour with the civil powers in the days of Henry VIII. as an ornament to the nave of the church, and that was the royal arms! By what authority this incongruous addition to the furniture of a House of Prayer was first set up is not evident, but it was introduced during the primacy of Thomas Cranmer. In September, 1555, the then deposed Archbishop was examined at Oxford, when Martin, proctor for the Crown, thus addressed him: "If you mark the devil's language well, it agreed with your proceedings most truly. For '*Mitte te deorsum*,' 'Cast thyself downward,' said he; and so taught you to cast all things downward. Down with the sacrament! Down with the mass! Down with the altars! Down with the arms of Christ, and up with a lion and a dog!" By the arms of Christ the rood is meant, and by the lion and the dog the royal arms, Henry VIII. having employed, amongst other supporters to the royal shield occasionally assumed, a golden lion and a white greyhound. The place usually occupied by these arms was immediately over the chancel arch, just above where the rood had formerly stood upon the screen; the contrast insisted upon by Dr. Martin was therefore the more striking. Very few of these Erastian emblems are to be seen now in the churches themselves; but preserved, more or less as curiosities, many of them still exist in belfries or vestries. They were usually repainted from time to time; and any alteration in the arms was then introduced, so that there are very few really ancient examples left. The later arms of George III.—those used after 1801, when the French *fleurs de lys* were dropped—are perhaps those most frequently seen. There are, however, older ones; at Acaster Malbis is the shield of James II., dated

1683, now in the vestry; and doubtless there are others as old, or older. Marr, near Doncaster, has, or recently had, the shield still over the chancel arch, as also had Castleford.

The more temporary adornment of churches with flowers and foliage has a very high antiquity. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, describing the preparation for keeping a festival, exclaims:

"Spargite flore solum, praetexite limina sertis;"
"Strew ye the floor with flowers, with boughs the threshold weave."

S. Jerome tells us that his friend Nepotian "made flowers of various kinds, the leaves of trees, and the branches of the vine contribute to the beauty and decoration of the Church;" and he adds words which well express the principle on which such things and others, which a sour Puritanism is wont to sneer at, are admirable. "These things," he says, "are in themselves but trifling; but a pious mind, devoted to Christ, is careful of small things, as well as great, and leaves undone nothing that belongs even to the lowliest office in the Church."

Stowe's "Survey of London" (1598) gives evidence of the English custom, when it tells us "that against the feast of Christmas every man's house, as also their parish churches, were decked with holme, ivy, bayes, and whatsoever the season of the year afforded to be green." Barnabe Googe, also, in his "Papistical Kingdom" (translated from Naogeorgus), says concerning a dedication festival:—

"From out the steeple high is hangde a cross and banner fayre,
The pavement of the temple strowde with hearbes of pleasant ayre,
The pulpets and the aulters, all that in the church are seene,
And every pewe and pillar grete are deckt with boughes of greene."

Several of these extracts allude to the scattering of flowers

on the floor as one part of the preparation of a church for a festival. We are still familiar with the usage as a sign of joy, from seeing it done occasionally at a wedding, but its use at Church festivals has quite lapsed, though the writer has seen it in at least one church, avowedly as a revival of a pretty mediæval custom.

Christmas time has long been the great occasion of decoration in English churches, and the usage of holly, ivy, and box at that season has lasted in an unbroken tradition through all the days of carelessness and neglect. Of all the foliage available at that cold time, mistletoe alone seems by universal agreement to be excluded from the church. It was the sacred plant of the Druids, which may have made the Church cautious of using it; but it was also the plant which supplied the fatal shaft which slew Baldr the Beautiful, and it may therefore mean that our Saxon forefathers so far clung to their ancestral myths, that they would not use the death-symbol of Baldr at the birth of the White Christ. The secular frivolities connected with the mistletoe have no doubt had something to do with keeping it out of Church in more recent times. It is said that there is only one instance of mistletoe being introduced in the carving of an English church, and that is on a tomb in Bristol Cathedral.

The Christmas decorations must be taken down before Candlemas Day, and if but a single leaf or berry be left in a pew, some one of those who usually occupy that seat will die before another Yuletide; such at least is the belief of many, and people have been known to send their own servants to the church to sweep out their pews most carefully on Candlemas Eve.

Easter is now becoming almost as generally marked by its decorations as Christmas, and no season provides flowers more effective for the purpose than a fine spring. Whitsuntide has scarcely yet been accorded equal honours, yet it was specially regarded by our forefathers. It used to be customary to deck the churches in Shropshire with boughs of birch at the feast of Pentecost; and the same method of garnishing was in vogue in Staffordshire, if we may judge by some items in the Bilston accounts. In 1691 we read, "For dressing ye chapel with birch, 6d.;" in 1697, "For birch to dress ye chapel at Whitsuntide, 6d.;" and again in 1702, "For dressing ye chapel, and to Ann Knowles for birch and a rose, 10d." The same tree is a favourite for Whitsuntide decoration in Germany.

The festival of S. Barnabas the Apostle (June 11th) was of old observed with special devotion in England, perhaps owing to its proximity to Midsummer Day. The churches were dressed for the anniversary with roses, lavender, and woodrooffe.

A singular custom existed at Ripon on Christmas Day at one time; the boys of the choir came to church provided with baskets full of rosy apples, in each of which was stuck a sprig of rosemary or box. These were carried round and offered to the members of the congregation, who were expected to give some little gratuity, varying usually from twopence to sixpence, in return.

Before leaving our consideration of the nave, with its uses and abuses, its disfigurements and decorations, one curious form of adornment that has been accidentally introduced into several churches should be mentioned, and that is, the existence of trees, growing and flourishing, within the building.

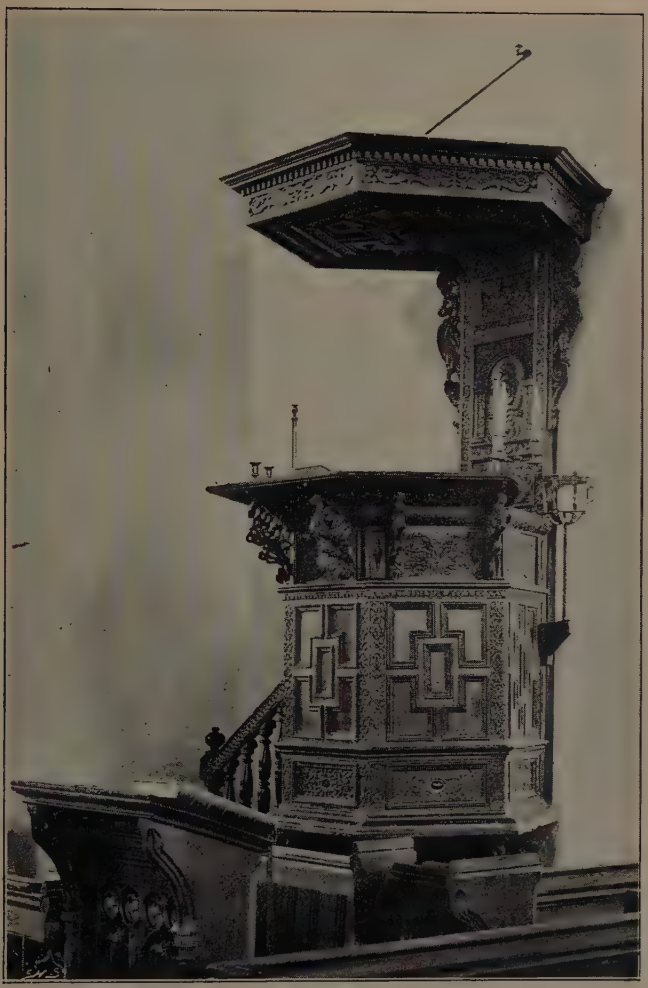
At Ross Church, in the pew rendered memorable by its regular use by John Kyrle, Pope's "Man of Ross," two trees may be seen growing. There are other examples, which, though not standing in the naves of churches, it will be convenient to mention here. A chestnut-tree grows from the tomb of Sir Edmund Wylde, in the chancel of Kempsey Church, near Worcester. Some years ago, a lad sitting in the chancel was discovered eating chestnuts, and one in his hand was snatched from him and flung behind this tomb; there it has taken root and grown, in spite of efforts to dislodge it. Outside at least two churches trees have sprung out of the walls; at Castle Morton, near Tewkesbury, is one growing from the side of the spire, and at Whaplode, in Lincolnshire, is a birch-tree on the tower.

CHAPTER VII.

The Pulpit and the Lectern.

TWO of the most conspicuous pieces of furniture in the naves of our churches are the pulpit and the lectern, yet neither of them is really ancient. They are developments upon different lines of the *ambo*, the elevated platform with a double flight of steps, from which the Epistle and Gospel were declaimed in the early Church, the acts and martyrdoms of the saints were read, and sermons were sometimes delivered. Placed at the entrance of the choir or chancel, this grew into the loft or gallery which surmounted the mediæval rood-screen, on which were often placed desks for the book of the Gospels; and this gallery was anciently called the *pulpitum*. When the custom arose of reading the lections at the offering of the Eucharist within the chancel near the altar itself, desks were provided there for the books, and these lecterns are also known in France as *pulpitres*.

In mediæval England, a pulpit was by no means universally found as part of the furniture of a church, sermons often being delivered, especially in country churches (where the celebrant at mass must frequently have been the preacher also) from the altar; and where they existed, they were usually light movable structures, which could be brought out when needed, and pushed into some corner out of the way at other times. It is therefore not surprising that very



From a Photo by) *(A. Whitford Anderson.*

PULPIT, S. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, ST. ALBANS.

few really ancient examples have survived. At Norwich Cathedral the pulpit was on wheels, and was run into a side chapel when not required for use; and a similar custom existed at Christ Church, and at S. Patrick's, and Kilkenny, in Ireland. Hereford still preserves its old movable pulpit; and others may be seen at Great S. Mary's, Cambridge, and at Christ Church, Streatham.

The honour of possessing the oldest wooden pulpit in England is claimed by Fulbourne, near Cambridge, the example there dating from 1350; at Lutterworth is one probably almost as old, from which, it is alleged, that Wiclif preached during his incumbency (1375-1384). From the Jacobean period we have received many fine old pulpits, several of them dignified with imposing canopies and sounding-boards. S. John's Church, Leeds, has a very handsome one, as also has S. Michael's, at S. Albans. The latter still retains the stand for an hour-glass, which in the seventeenth century, the era *par excellence* of lengthy sermons, became a necessary addition to its furniture. S. Alban's, Wood Street, London, has preserved not only the stand, but the hour-glass itself. A bracket for this purpose may yet be seen in several other churches, either on the pulpit, or on a pillar or a wall near. There were advantages in placing the hour-glass beyond the preacher's reach, for occasionally, in the days of Puritan ascendancy, the vigour of the orator, if not the attention of the hearers, seems to have been almost inexhaustible; and there is a story of a preacher who, having seen the last sands of his monitor run out while yet his discourse was in full flood, quietly turned it, with the remark that there was "yet time to have another glass together," and so started on another hour.

Of all strange pieces of ecclesiastical furniture, surely the "three-decker" was one of the oddest. This preacher's castle was usually erected in the midst of the church, blocking out chancel and altar from view, and dwarfing everything else in the building. Below was the desk wherein sat the parish clerk, droning responses to the priest, and acting proxy for the whole congregation. Above this rose the desk of the parson, where in voluminous surplice and flowing bands, he read the prayers. On the "upper deck" was the pulpit, to which the preacher ascended, after first arraying himself in his black gown. One smiles to think of the smug satisfaction of that genius who first evolved this precious arrangement from his inner consciousness; how compact the whole structure appeared to him, how eminently convenient! And how successfully, we might add, it strove to make the House of Prayer appear to be nothing but a House of Preaching! Happily this abomination has become a tradition, and scarcely more; probably in some obscure corners of the country an example or two may still be found; but such as survive are now curiosities indeed.

Pulpits are never mentioned in old inventories of Church furniture and property, for the reasons already given; in those of the last century and the early years of this, their condition, and that of their cushions and the number of the tassels thereon, seem to have been objects of great solicitude to archdeacons and other ecclesiastical authorities. Pulpits were first ordered to be universally provided in the injunctions of 1547, but they were specially intended then for the reading of the lections at the Eucharist. "In the time of High Mass," writes Cranmer, "he that saith or singeth the same shall read, or cause to be read, the epistle and

gospel of that Mass in English, and not in Latin, in the pulpit, or in such convenient place as the people may hear the same." In that same year the churchwardens of S. Margaret's, Westminster, paid the sum of 2s. "for making of the stone in the body of the church for the priest to declare the pistills and gospells." This was, perhaps, a temporary arrangement, for in 1553, they spent 15s. in providing "a pulpit, where the curate and the clarke did read the chapters at service time." The first law which definitely assigns the pulpit as the place for the sermon, is the eighty-third canon (1603), which runs as follows: "The Churchwardens or Questmen, at the common charge of the Parishioners in every Church, shall provide a comely and decent Pulpit, to be set in a convenient place within the same, by the discretion of the Ordinary of the place, if any question do arise, and to be there seemly kept for the preaching of God's word."

Much more care was taken to have the people properly instructed in the faith in the mediæval Church than is sometimes supposed. Two of the Excerptions of Egbert, Archbishop of York, issued in 750, are to the effect that "on all festivals, and on the Lord's Day, the priest shall preach the gospel unto the people;" and that "every priest shall, with the greatest diligence, instruct the people committed to his charge in the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the whole of religion." In the reign of Ethelred, and about the year 994, were promulged Theodulph's *Capitula*, one of which runs thus: "We exhort every priest to be prepared to teach the people by preaching to them the scriptures, but let him that is ignorant of them at least say this, 'That they should abstain from that which is evil, and

do that which is good,' and so forth : no priest can excuse himself from teaching, for every one of you has a tongue by which he may reclaim some." About three centuries later, namely in 1281, Archbishop Peckham issued at Lambeth certain constitutions, which give very explicit instructions on the question of preaching. "We decree," he says, "that every priest who presides over the people shall four times a year publicly expound to the people in the vulgar tongue, without fantastical subtlety, the fourteen articles of the faith, the ten commandments of the decalogue, the two precepts of the gospel, the seven works of mercy, the seven deadly sins, the seven principal virtues, and the seven sacraments of grace." This, as a scheme of instruction to be used fully every quarter, must, every one will admit, have been amply sufficient to supply sermons for all the thirteen Sundays. Again in a constitution issued for the diocese of Sodor in 1350, it is ordered that "all rectors, vicars, and chaplains, shall on every Sunday and festival, carefully expound to their parishioners the word of God, the Catholic faith, and the Apostles' Creed, in the vulgar tongue." To quote one more instance only, Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1408 gives fresh authority to the injunctions of his predecessor Peckham, and orders all priests to counteract the teaching of the Lollards by keeping to the course of instruction laid down by him.

The practice of writing one's sermons and reading them from the manuscript arose towards the end of Henry VIII.'s reign. It was a troublous time, in which a man was exceedingly liable to "be made an offender for a word;" some, therefore, preached as little as possible, and others wrote out what they wished to say, so as to ensure the

weighing of every expression used. It was to meet such cases, as well as to supply the needs of those who thought themselves unable to preach, that the homilies were written and authorised. The first book, published under Edward VI., contained a dozen discourses written chiefly by Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer; the second book followed in the reign of Elizabeth; it consists of twenty-one homilies, most of which were composed by Jewel. According to the canons of 1603, every resident parish priest, "allowed to be a preacher," must preach "one sermon every Sunday of the year;" which strictly ought to be at a celebration of the Eucharist, since at that service only does the Prayer-book provide for any sermon. Should the "beneficed man," however, not be in the happy position of being "allowed to be a preacher," he must procure some one, who is so, to address his people at least once a month, and on other Sundays he must read a homily.

The publication of homilies for the use of the less learned clergy was far from being a new expedient. Theodulph's *Capitula* assumed, as in the extract already given, that some priests were unable to preach, and indeed it was but natural that many even of the clergy should have but little education at that date. The bishops therefore composed sermons, or homilies, in the English (or Anglo-Saxon) tongue to assist such priests as had need of them.

The mediæval preachers were extremely fond of allegory, every passage being spiritualized with a fancifulness which would be irritating to a modern congregation. We have what is practically a sermon after the manner of the times in Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," under the name of "The Parson's Tale." The love of parable and allegory shows

itself also in several of the more famous preachers of the Reformation period, especially in Latimer, whose "Sermons on the Card," preached at Cambridge in 1529, and "Sermon of the Plough," which was preached "in the shrouds at Paul's Church in London," in 1548, are full of quaint conceits of this kind.

In a sermon preached before King Edward VI. in April, 1549, Latimer deals largely with the question of preaching, which, of course, after the manner of the Reformers, he greatly extolls. An extract will not be out of place here. Having referred to our Saviour's sitting in a boat to teach the people, he goes on: "I would our preachers would preach sitting or standing, one way or other. It was a goodly pulpit that our Saviour Christ had gotten Him here, an old rotten boat, and yet he preached His Father's will, His Father's message, out of this pulpit. He cared not for the pulpit, so he might do the people good. . . . And though it be good to have the pulpit set up in churches, that the people may resort thither, yet I would not have it so superstitiously used, but that in a profane place the word of God might be preached sometimes; and I would not have the people offended withal, no more than they be with our Saviour Christ's preaching out of a boat. And yet to have pulpits in churches, it is very well done to have them, but they would be occupied; for it is a vain thing to have them as they stand in many churches. I heard of a bishop of England that went on visitation, and as it was the custom, when the bishop should come, and be rung into the town, the great bell's clapper was fallen down, the tyall was broken, so that the bishop could not be rung into the town. There was a great matter made of this, and the chief of the parish were

much blamed for it in the visitation. The bishop was somewhat quick with them, and signified that he was much offended. They made their answers and excused themselves as well as they could. 'It was a chance,' said they, 'that the clapper brake, and we could not get it mended by and by; we must tarry till we can have it done; it shall be amended as shortly as may be.' Among the other, there was one wiser than the rest, and he comes me to the bishop: 'Why, my lord,' saith he, 'doth your lordship make so great a matter of the bell that lacketh his clapper? Here is a bell,' said he, and pointed to the pulpit, 'that hath lacked a clapper this twenty years. We have a parson that fetcheth out of this benefice fifty pound every year, but we never see him.' I warrant you that the bishop was an unpreaching prelate. He could find fault with the bell that wanted a clapper to ring him into the town, but he could not find any fault with the parson that preached not at his benefice."

Master Latimer had reason himself to find fault at times that his coming into a parish was not sufficiently regarded by the people. In the sermon just quoted he relates how once, when travelling, he sent word to the next town that he would preach there on the following morning as it was a holiday (May Day); but on arriving, expecting "a great company in the church," he found the door locked and no congregation. "One of the parish comes to me," he goes on, "and says, 'Sir, this is a busy day with us, we cannot hear you; it is Robin Hood's day: the parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood; I pray you let them not.' I was fain there to give place to Robin Hood; I thought my rochet should have been regarded, though I were not;

but it would not serve, it was fain to give place to Robin Hood's men." It almost seems as though the preacher did not command as much sympathy in his disappointment, from the congregation to whom he related it, as he deemed his due; for he exclaims, "It is no laughing matter, my friends, it is a weeping matter!"

Preachers have sometimes employed artifice to make their sermons more telling, as in the case of the unlucky Dr. Shaw, who, preaching in S. Paul's one day in 1483, prepared a sentence beginning, "Behold this excellent Prince!" which was to be uttered just as Richard, Duke of Gloucester, entered. The Duke, however, came a little too late, and the catch phrase, by its repetition, made the art of the speech a little too obvious. Preaching in the same cathedral, Aylmer, Bishop of London from 1577 to 1595, startled a congregation, whose attention his eloquence had not succeeded in rivetting, by suddenly producing from beneath his gown a skull, and holding it up before their eyes. The stories of aptly chosen texts are endless, and would form no small volume by themselves. One only shall be given here, and that more particularly to correct a commonly related version of it. There is a well-known anecdote of a worthy preacher who delivered a sermon before King James the First of England and Sixth of Scotland, from a text which was thus announced, "James first and sixth, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.'" It is a pity to spoil a good story, but the verse quoted is not the sixth of the first chapter of S. James's Epistle, but the eighth. The real text of the sermon, provided that that reference was really given, was perhaps as appropriate, but not so concise; namely, "He that wavereth

is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed."

There have been several sums of money left specially to endow the preaching of a sermon, or a course of sermons, under given circumstances. The best known is that which gave a foundation to the Bampton Lectures. By the will of the Rev. John Bampton, Canon of Salisbury, it was ordered that the authorities of the University of Oxford should, as trustees of his estates, appoint yearly a Master of Arts of Oxford or Cambridge to deliver a course of eight divinity lectures or sermons, at S. Mary's, Oxford, the character of the subjects being specified in the will. The first was given in 1780. Another course is known as the Boyle Lectures, from having been founded by Robert Boyle, a president of the Royal Society, who died in 1691. By his will he established a series of eight lectures in defence of the Christian faith; the first of which was delivered by Richard Bentley in 1692; they are now preached at S. Mary-le-Bow, in Cheapside. The Rev. John Hulse, of Elworth, by a will dated 1777, left a sum for the foundation of a series of lectures at Cambridge, which are hence called Hulsean; originally they were twenty in number, but they have been reduced to eight. The Donnellan Lectures were established in 1794 by a fund bequeathed to Trinity College, Dublin, by Mrs. Anne Donnellan, and consist of a course of six. Bishop Warburton also founded an annual lecture, known from that fact as the Warburtonian, in defence of the Christian Faith, especially with regard to the fulfilment of the prophecies of Scripture. The Moyer Lectures no longer exist. These were eight sermons preached annually in S. Paul's, the subjects being the Holy Trinity and the Divinity

of Christ, for which Lady Moyer, widow of Sir Samuel Moyer, Bart. (who died in 1716), bequeathed the sum of £20 per annum. The last Moyer lecturer was Dr. Thomas Morell, in 1773.

There are other similar instances which, if not so celebrated, have a more interesting history. One of these is the Lion Sermon at S. Katherine Cree. Within the altar rails of this church is a bust of Sir John Gayer, with these two passages of Scripture on either side, "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers," and "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;" while underneath is a brass, erected in 1888 by descendants of the knight, with a long inscription which begins as follows:—

"In Memory of
Sir John Gayer, Knt.,
Founder of the 'Lion Sermon,' who was descended from
the Old West Country Family of Gayer,
and was born at Plymouth,
and became Sheriff of this City of London in 1635
and Lord Mayor of London in 1647."

A subsequent paragraph informs us that "He resided in this parish, and 'Dyed in peace in his owne house' on the 20th of July, 1649." Sir John was a man of remarkable enterprise for his time, and travelled far in furtherance of his business as a "Turkey Merchant." On one occasion, while journeying through Arabia with a caravan of traders, he got towards nightfall separated from his company, and found himself compelled to spend the hours of darkness alone in the desert. Falling on his knees, he made a solemn vow that all the profits of his expedition should be given to God and the poor, if the hand of Divine

Providence should bring him back in safety to his home. While he was praying a lion of magnificent size, with bristling mane, and eyes aglow, approached him; its hot breath passed over him, as the creature sniffed at him, and he saw its great form, dusky in the dim light, prowling around and again around him; then, without harming a hair of his head, the monarch of the desert stalked off into the darkness. Sir John spent the remainder of the night upon his knees; and in the morning succeeded in rejoining his companions, and in due time returned home. In fulfilment of his vow he gave large benefactions to the poor of his own parish during the rest of his life-time; and at his death left £200 for their relief, on condition that "a sermon should be occasionally preached in the church to commemorate his deliverance from the jaws of the lion."

The Fairchild sermon is preached at S. Leonard's, Shoreditch, at Whitsuntide. It was instituted in accordance with a bequest of Mr. Thomas Fairchild, a gardener of Hoxton, who died in 1729, and left by will a sum of money for an annual sermon on "The wonderful works of God in the Creation," or on "The certainty of the resurrection of the dead proved by the certain changes of the animal and vegetable parts of the creation." A Mrs. Hawkins, who died in 1780, and was buried in S. Helen's, Abingdon, bequeathed a considerable sum to local charities (together with £400 for a rather vulgarly showy monument to herself), and a further amount for four sermons to be preached yearly on certain specified days, one being the anniversary of her own death.

The Skinners' Company gives the sum of two guineas yearly to the preacher of a special sermon in one of the city

churches, which the company attends in state on the feast of Corpus Christi, the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. This is interesting especially as a survival of the time when that day was commonly observed as the annual commemoration of most of our ancient gilds and confraternities. The brethren first attended mass, and then had their business meeting; the rest of the day being spent in festivity. The election of the governors of this company still takes place on this day; and the nosegays worn or carried by the members are a relic of the flowers once strewn along the route of the Corpus Christi procession.

In addition to the appointed public sermon at the Eucharist, and the "lectures" which have now become universal at evensong, and, when the Eucharist is not celebrated, at matins also, sermons were formerly delivered at weddings, funerals, and on other occasions of solemnity. In the first Prayer-book of Edward VI. (1549) the following rubric occurs in the course of the nuptial mass: "Then shall be said after the gospel a sermon, wherein ordinarily (so oft as there is any marriage) the office of man and wife shall be declared according to holy scripture. Or if there be no sermon, the minister shall read this that followeth:" the address following being practically the same as that now found in the office for holy matrimony. Each successive edition of the Prayer-book has repeated this direction with only verbal alteration. As a sample of the kind of sermon sometimes delivered on these occasions, the following quaint extract from one given by Dr. Hacket in 1607 will prove of interest, especially as it offers also an explanation of an old wedding custom. "Ros marinus, the rosemary," says the doctor, "is for married men; the which, by name, nature,

and continued use, man challengeth as properly belonging to himself. It overtoppeth all the flowers in the garden, boasting man's rule. It helpeth the braine, strengtheneth the memorie, and is very medicinable for the head. Another property of the rosemary is, it affects the heart. Let the ros marinus, this flower of men, ensigne of your wisdom, love, and loyaltie, be carried not only in your hands, but in your heads and hearts."

The question of funeral sermons caused some controversy among the more extreme Reformers in the sixteenth century; not that they had any objection to sermons in themselves at any time, for indeed that might be said of them which Hooker says of the people of his day, "They (the primitive Christians) in the practice of their religion wearied chiefly their knees and hands, we especially our ears and tongues; we are grown . . . in this to a kind of intemperancy which (only sermons excepted) hath almost brought all other duties of religion out of taste." But so fearful were these Reformers lest any kind of regard should be paid to the faithful dead, that they objected even to a discourse at their funerals as savouring somewhat of "popery."

Archbishop Whitgift writes, in answer to Thomas Cartwright, "Wherein have funeral sermons offended you? or with what face of brass dare you liken them to trentals? . . . What? is there a more fit time to entreat of the mortality of man, and shortness of his days, of the vanity of this world, of the uncertainty of riches, of the resurrection, of the judgment to come, of eternal life, and of everlasting death, and of infinite other most necessary points, than that wherein we have a present example before our eyes?" In this, as in some other respects, the influence of Geneva lay

at the back of the captious scrupulosity of the objectors, as is illustrated by a letter from Rodolph Gualter, of Zurich, to Cox, Bishop of Ely, under date August 26th, 1573. "Funeral sermons," he writes, "are not usual among us; and since men are naturally inclined to superstitions, and those especially which are thought to aid the salvation of the deceased, it is better either to abstain from them altogether, or so to conduct them as that all may understand that whatever takes place upon such occasions is done for the sake of the living who are present as hearers, and not for the sake of the departed." Weak and narrow as such a line of argument is, all will admit that there is some truth in a statement further down in the same letter, to the effect that on these occasions the preachers too often "take up almost the whole of their sermons with the commendations of the departed."

Grindal preached "at the funeral solemnity of the Most High and Mighty Prince Ferdinandus, the late Emperor of most famous memory, holden in the Cathedral Church of S. Paul, in London," on October 3rd, 1564; on which occasion there was erected in the choir "an hearse richly garnished." Archbishop Sandys also preached in the same place at the "Solemnization of the Funeral" of Charles IX. of France, on May 30th, 1574. It is scarcely needful to add that both these were what would now be called, in our much less forcible phrase, "Memorial Services," not strictly funerals.

In the steward's accounts, preserved at Haddon Hall, are sundry items of expenditure in connection with the funeral in 1650 of Mr. John Eyre, one of the household of the Earl of Rutland, in the chancel of the Savoy; whereof one is an entry of £1 2s. 0d. paid "to the minister for his sermon."

In the English Church funeral sermons have dropt very largely out of use, though "orations" are still common on such occasions on the Continent. Curiously enough they are still popular among those who are most nearly related in opinion to the Genevan objectors of three centuries since, the Dissenters. On the whole we could well afford to let the practice go; a funeral is of itself a sufficiently harrowing experience for the mourners without a long appeal to their lacerated feelings; and too often the address becomes a mere panegyric, than which nothing can at such a time be in much worse taste.

Not much that is curious has yet had time to gather about the Lectern, for it is, in its present use, a modern piece of church furniture. In pre-Reformation days there were book-stands, or lecterns, provided in many churches, especially in large and important ones, for supporting the books of the Gospels and the Epistles at Mass; but the "lessons," or lections, at the daily offices are in their present form an outcome of the Reformation, the *capitula*, or little chapters, of the Canonical Hours being short passages of one or two verses only. The lectern for the Gospels was frequently made in the form of an eagle, on whose outspread wings the book was laid; and from this we have derived the design of so many of our modern lecterns. Merton College, Oxford, has an eagle lectern of the fifteenth century, as also has S. Gregory's, Norwich, the latter example being dated 1496. Several handsome lecterns dating from the seventeenth century are in our cathedrals, and in some of our churches. Winchester, Wells, Lincoln, York, and Canterbury Cathedrals, and the parish church of Lynn, have brazen eagles of that date; Salisbury has one dated 1719; and

Southwell one formerly in Newstead Abbey. The York eagle was almost the only thing saved, and that with difficulty, from the fire caused in the choir of the minster by Martin, the madman, in 1829.

Bristol Cathedral had a brazen eagle, presented to it in 1683 by the Rev. George Williamson, sub-dean, the story of which has some interest. In the year 1802 the Dean and Chapter, wishing for a sum of money for some decoration of their cathedral, actually sold this eagle at the price of old brass in order to obtain it! A devout citizen, who attended the cathedral services with commendable regularity, noticed the absence of the familiar lectern, made a search for it, and found it lying at a brazier's, where it was (so it is said) about to be melted down. He rescued it, and offered it to the cathedral authorities for the small sum at which he had bought it, on condition that it was replaced and kept in the choir; his offer was, however, declined. At last it was sold by auction, and the notice of the sale is sufficiently curious for transcription. It was advertised as follows in a local paper:

THE EAGLE
FROM THE BRISTOL CATHEDRAL.

To be sold by auction
At the Exchange Coffee-Room in this city,
On Thursday, the 2nd of September, 1803, between the hours of one and two o'clock in the afternoon,
(unless previously disposed of by private contract).

A BEAUTIFUL
BRAZEN SPREAD EAGLE
With a Ledge at the Tail
standing on a brass pedestal,
supported by four lions, one at each corner.

This elegant piece of workmanship was sold, last June, by the dean and chapter of the cathedral church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity of Bristol, or their agents or servants, as old brass, and weighed 6 cwt. 20 lb., or 692 lb., and has since been purchased, at an advanced price, by a native of this city, in order to prevent it being broken up, and to give the inhabitants a chance of buying it.

It was given to the cathedral, in the reign of Charles II., by one of the prebendaries, who had been there forty years; and is supposed, by the following Latin inscription (which was engraved on the pillar or pedestal) to have stood in the choir 119 years:—

"Ex Dono Georgij Williamson, S. T. B. Hujus Ecclesiae Cathedrelis Bristoll: Vice-Decani, 1683."

That is, "The Gift of George Williamson, Bachelor of Divinity, Sub-dean of this Cathedral Church of Bristol, 1683."

The whole of the inscription, except the figures 1683, has been taken off the pedestal without the consent of the buyer; which he has since had re-engraved.

This piece of antiquity, which is of the most exquisite shape, is made of the best and purest brass, and well worth the attention of ministers and churchwardens, or any gentleman or lady who would wish to make a present of it to their parish church; traders, also, to foreign parts may find it worth their while to purchase, as a like opportunity may never offer again.

Such a handsome bird would be, as it has hitherto been, a very great ornament to the middle aisle of a church. It for many years stood in the choir of Bristol Cathedral, and upheld with its wings the Sacred Truths of the Blessed Gospel. The minor-canons formerly read the lessons on it, and in most cathedrals the custom is kept up to this day.

This superb image is now at King Street Hall, and may be inspected three days previous to the day of sale.

N.B.—The purchaser offered, previous to an advertisement, to resell the eagle at the price he paid for it, provided it were replaced in the choir; which offer was rejected.

This lectern found its way eventually to the church of S. Mary-le-Port, in Bristol, where it now is.

Occasionally we find the lectern taking the form of the "pelican in her piety," instead of the eagle. The gospel lectern at Durham was of this shape, and the tradition has been preserved in the modern lectern in the nave,

which is an exceptionally handsome one. Another such exists at Wimborne, and there was one formerly at Waterford.

By the eightieth canon the churchwardens are bound to provide, for use in church, a Bible "of the largest volume," at the charge of the parish.

The only quaint custom associated with the lectern is the one connected with the use of the gad-whip at Caistor, Lincolnshire, on Palm Sunday. This extraordinary usage is sufficiently described in a petition presented to the House of Lords in 1836 by the lord of the manor of Hundon, near Caistor (Sir Culling Eardley Smith), begging for its suppression. In this document it is said "that the lord of the manor of Broughton, near Brigg, yearly, on Palm Sunday, employs a person to perform the following ceremony in the parish church of Caistor; a cart-whip of the fashion of several centuries since, called a gad-whip, with four pieces of wyche-elm bound round the stock, and a leather purse attached to the extremity of the stock, containing thirty pence, is, during divine service, cracked in the church porch; and, while the second lesson is reading, is brought into the church, and held over the reading-desk by the person who carries it. It is afterwards deposited with the tenant of Hundon." It was traditionally asserted that this act was originally a penance for a murder, and that the lord of Hundon could exact some penalty from the lord of Broughton if it were omitted. Sir Culling, in his capacity as the former of these magnates, made every effort to stop so indecent an interruption to the service, offering to indemnify any one who should be a loser by its cessation; but for some time in vain. At last in 1846 the land was sold,

which was supposed to be held by this objectionable tenure, and the practice was allowed to lapse.*

One word may be added in closing this chapter on another article of furniture usually placed near the pulpit and the lectern, namely, the Litany-desk. In mediæval times a desk, or form, stood in the midst of the choir for the use of the cantors at mass, and other solemn offices. When the custom, formerly invariable, of singing the litany in procession round the church, or through the parish, was exchanged for the present mode of reciting it kneeling in one place, this cantors' form was used by the priest, or a desk was placed where that had previously been. Hence in cathedrals we find the litany-desk in the midst of the choir. In parish churches the priest's stall was more commonly used for that, as well as for the other prayers, until comparatively recently. The litany-desk is often, but quite incorrectly, called a fald-stool, a term which really means a folding-chair or stool, used by bishops or other dignitaries in church. Cosin, when Archdeacon of the East Riding of Yorkshire, nevertheless calls the litany-desk by this name; and Bishop Andrewes had, in his chapel, a "faldistory" for the saying of the Litany. So that the term in this sense can claim some authority and antiquity.

* The last gad-whip used is in the possession of Mr. William Andrews, of Hull.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Font.

THE earliest churches of which we have any detailed account had not fonts within the portion devoted to public worship. Baptism was at first administered in the open air, on the banks of streams or rivers; and when it became possible to erect spacious buildings for the offices of the Christian faith, a special chamber, the baptistery, was prepared for its initial sacrament. This was often a distinct building of great size; baptism being publicly administered only at stated intervals, so that the catechumens were sometimes very numerous. It appears to have been about the sixth century that the baptistery began to be constructed as part of the church itself, though it was still outside the main building, a porch sometimes being used for the purpose.

The laver of regeneration within these baptisteries was a well or tank, round or cruciform in plan, whose brim was level with the pavement. Steps were provided upon the right and left sides by which the catechumen and the officiant descended and ascended. According to Thomas Cartwright, the Puritan antagonist of Archbishop Whitgift, fonts, as we now have them, were "invented by Pope Pius;" but this can scarcely be correct. They are certainly later than the time of Pius I., who reigned from the year 142 to about 157; and it is equally clear that they were in use before the days of Pius II., who did not ascend the papal

throne until 1458. As a matter of fact, the custom of baptism by affusion, rather than by immersion, began to be usual in the west about the eighth century; and with this came naturally the construction of smaller fonts. At about the same time, also, the privilege of baptism was conceded to the larger town churches, having formerly been reserved to the cathedrals only. Even after this date small village churches were not provided with fonts, baptism being performed, as confirmation now is, at important centres and at stated seasons, except in cases of necessity; collegiate and conventual churches also, having no parish or district assigned to them, had no need of fonts. These exceptions explain the terms of a canon of the council of Meaux, held in 845; "Let no priest presume to baptise except in towns and in *baptismal churches*, and at the appointed seasons." The same phrase occurs in the Constitutions of Archbishop Edmund of Canterbury, issued as late as 1236; "Let there be a stone baptistery in every baptismal church."

According to Ivo the canonist, who flourished about 1092, fonts must be of hard non-porous stone; and the obvious utility of this substance for the purpose has made its use practically universal. There are, however, a few interesting exceptions. Evenechtyd, Denbighshire, has a unique example of a wooden font, hewn from a single solid block of hard timber. At Chobham, Surrey, the outer case is of oak, but it encloses a leaden basin. Plumstead Magna, Norfolk, has a font of lead, as also have Walton-on-the-Hill, Clewer, Wareham, Dorchester, Parham, Tiddenham, and Frampton-on-Severn, and at Barnetby-le-Wold, Lincolnshire, is an interesting example of the same metal, which is not now in use. At S. Mary de Castro, Guernsey, is a small

font of silver; and on the Continent bronze has been employed in several instances.

The almost invariable shape of the later mediæval fonts is octagonal; eight being emblematic of renewal, as seven is of completion. In earlier times the designer allowed himself a greater latitude. Of our surviving examples of Norman, or pre-Norman, fonts, the shapes are various. At S. Martin's, Canterbury, the font is circular, adorned with a single row of intersecting arches, and three rows of interlaced rings: it has no shaft, but is in the form of a truncated column. Deerhurst has a Saxon font somewhat similar in outline, but more elaborately carved; and the same form is shown in the font at Kirkburn, Yorkshire. Many, however, are externally square, though hollowed into a circular bowl within. Winchester Cathedral has an ancient example of this type, the sides of which are rudely carved with scenes from the life of S. Nicholas. Leicestershire has some interesting square fonts; as, for instance, at Twyford and at Ashby Folville. At S. Peter's, Oxford, is an ancient oval example; and at Newington, Kent, we find another placed "buffet fashion," against the wall.

The decorative carvings upon fonts are often elaborate. The sides are in some instances enriched with traceried arches, as at Patrington, Yorkshire, whose circular font has twelve arches sculptured on it, with crocketed pinnacles between. Figures, in more or less bold relief, are often carved upon handsome fonts. At Coleshill and at Mitton we find a crucifix; at several places, as Lynn, Walsoken, Nettlecombe, Norwich, Happisburgh, Worsted and Dereham are the emblems of the seven sacraments; at Stixwould and elsewhere are the emblems of the four Evangelists; at

Huttoft is an exceedingly handsome font, having on the eight sides of the bowl the Holy Trinity, the Madonna and Child, and the Apostles in pairs, on the shaft the figures of eight saints, while the whole rests upon the emblems of the Evangelists. Graceful, floral, or conventional designs sometimes wreath themselves about the bowl, as in the Leicestershire examples at Burrough, and at All Saints' and S. Mary's in the county town. S. Mary's, Stafford, has a specially curious font, sculptured with numerous uncouth figures. At Kentchester the font is supposed to be a section of a Doric column from the Roman station of Magna Castra; and at Great Toller, Dorset, is a Tudor bowl, the pedestal of which is a Roman altar. Burnham Deepdale, and Fincham, in Norfolk, and Melton, in Suffolk, have fine carved fonts; and at Cross Canonby, Cumberland, is one supposed to be of Roman workmanship.

Inscriptions are occasionally added to the other sculptures. A thirteenth-century font at S. Anthony, Cornwall, bears the legend, "Ecce, Karissimi, de Deo vero baptizabuntur Spiritu Sancto;" at Bradley are the first words of the three formulæ which sponsors were expected to know, namely, "Pater Noster," "Ave," and "Credo." The opening words of the Gospel according to S. John, "In principio," are upon the font at Dunsby. On several fonts in England, and on some abroad, occurs a curious inscription in Greek, which reads the same backwards and forwards. It may be seen at Hingham, Harlow, Dulwich, Melton Mowbray, Warlingworth, and S. Martin's, Ludgate; and is as follows:

ΝΙΨΟΝΑΝΟΜΗΜΑΜΗΜΟΝΑΝΟΨΙΝ,

that is *Νιψον ανομημα μη μοναν οψιν*, or in English, "Cleanse

the sin, not the face only." The font at Orford, Suffolk, is inscribed, "Orate pro animabus John Cokerel et Katerine uxoris ejus qui istam fontem in honore dei fecerunt fieri;" the date of this is approximately fixed by the fact that Catherine Cokerel died in 1403. At Wilne, in S. Chad's, is a font dating from Saxon days, upon which it was alleged that there was a runic inscription; but after many antiquaries had cudgelled their brains to decipher and translate it, it was found to be no inscription at all; a stone, having the figures of a number of men upon it, had been cut in two and reversed, the supposed runes being merely the series of legs upside down.

A synod at Durham, in 1220, ordained that fonts should be furnished with covers and locks, lest the water should be used for enchantments; and these covers have in several cases developed into lofty canopies, or open chambers, covering the font as the *ciborium* anciently did the altar. Good examples of the spire-like font-cover exist at Castle Acre, at Worsted, and at East Wretham, in Norfolk; Hepworth, Suffolk, has a fine one which happily escaped damage from the fire which recently well-nigh destroyed the church; others may be seen in Halifax Parish Church, and at many other places.

The font presented by Her Majesty the Queen to the Anglican Collegiate Church of S. George the Martyr, in Jerusalem, is provided with a handsomely carved cover of this kind. These covers are usually suspended by chains from the roof, or from an ornamental bracket in the wall, and are raised and lowered by a balanced pulley. At York a dragon-headed beam on the north side of the nave held the chain of the old font-cover.

The canopy over the font is not so common. Two good examples are supplied by S. Peter, Mancroft, Norwich, and Trunch, in the same county. The former of these is supported by four pillars, which were once gorgeously coloured, traces of the painting being still visible; a number of angels, some of them with long trumpets, stand on the pinnacles and in niches, and one surmounts the whole structure, within which hangs the font-cover. The fine carving of the wood-work suffered severely in the past, probably from Puritan violence, which was extreme in Norwich, but the canopy has recently been carefully and well restored. The canopy at Trunch is hexagonal, and has also been painted and gilded, and its columns and niches are finely carved. Another similar erection worthy of mention is at Luton, in Bedfordshire.

The Puritan Cartwright having alleged that the priest must go "for baptism unto the church-door," Archbishop Whitgift replies, in his "Defence," published in 1574, "I know divers places where it (the font) is in the midst of the church, some places where it is in the nethermost part, I know no place where it standeth at the church-door." This is curious, as it is certain that a position just within the door, as typifying the catechumen's entrance by baptism into the Church Catholic, was a common one for the font before that time. In cathedrals and other large churches one of the transepts is occasionally used as a baptistery; but there are many old fonts in the country apparently occupying their original position, and placed just within the south, or the west, door.

The Puritans had a great aversion to the erection of stone fonts, and endeavoured to substitute the use of movable

basins. Archbishop Parker, writing to Lord Burghley in November, 1573, says, "In London our fonts must go down, and the brazen eagles, which were ornaments in the chancel and made for lectures, must be molten to make pots and basins for new fonts; I do but marvel what some men mean, to gratify these Puritans railing against themselves, with such alteration, where order hath been taken publicly this seven years by commissioners according to the statute, that fonts should not be removed." The order referred to was part of the Advertisements issued by the bishops, which commanded "that the fonte be not removed, nor that the curate do baptise in parishe churches in anye basons, nor in any other forme then is already prescribed." Even Henry Bullinger, the Genevan Protestant, reckoned "a font ready to baptize infants in" among the "instruments belonging to the church;" but the decent reverence with which the people then regarded all the accessories of the sacraments scandalized the more extreme men of that faction. "Who dare handle the chalice, touch the altar-stone, or put his hand into the font, or his finger into the holy oil?" asks William Tyndale, in his "Obedience of a Christian Man," published in 1528.

Cranmer, in his "Answer to the Fifteen Articles of the Rebels of Devon, 1549," tells them, "It was thought sufficient to our forefathers (for baptism) to be done two times in the year, at Easter and Whitsuntide; as it appeareth by divers of their councils and decrees, which forbid baptism to be ministered at any other time than Easter and Whitsuntide, except in cases of necessity: and there remained lately divers signs and tokens thereof: for every Easter and Whitsun even, until this time, the fonts were hallowed in

every church, and many collects and other prayers were read for them that were baptized." Ælfric issued minute instructions to the Saxon clergy for this hallowing of the fonts. The ceremonial according to the use of Sarum was exceedingly impressive; the officiating priest being attended by five deacons, besides the deacon and sub-deacon of the mass, and by acolytes with cross, torches, incense, holy oil, the paschal candle, and the book of the office. Both on Easter Eve and Whitsun Eve the ceremony took place immediately before mass, following, on the former occasion, the benediction of the new fire and of the paschal candle. The church accounts of past days contain many allusions to this rite. The churchwardens of S. Andrew Hubbard, East Cheap, in 1510, "paid for a pound taper for hallowing at fonte and the cross candelas, viijd."; in 1552 a "towell for the fonte taper,"—one in which to envelope the lower part, probably, while carrying it,—was provided for S. Elphege's, Canterbury; and at S. Mary Hill a small sum, usually ijd., was paid on several occasions in the early sixteenth century "for water to be hallowed" at Easter even. A white cloth was wrapt about the font after its hallowing; and at Salisbury on every day during the succeeding Easter week there was a solemn procession to the font and seven times around it.

This blessing of the waters is a very ancient rite, and is alluded to by some of the earliest Christian authors. S. Cyprian, for instance, writing to Januarius and other Numidian bishops, says, "It is required that the water should first be cleansed and sanctified by the priest, that it may wash away by its baptism the sins of the man who is baptized;" the "Apostolical Constitutions" also contain a form of benediction of water for the sacrament of baptism.

In the first Prayer-book of Edward VI. (1549) there is a preface to the Baptismal Office which refers to the ancient limitation of its administration to certain seasons. "It appeareth by ancient writers," it says, "that the Sacrament of Baptism in the old time was not commonly ministered but at two times in the year, at Easter and Whitsuntide, at which times it was openly ministered in the presence of all the congregation: which custom (now being grown out of use), although it cannot for many considerations be well restored again, yet it is thought good to follow the same as near as conveniently may be: wherefore the people are to be admonished that it is most convenient that Baptism should not be ministered but upon Sundays and other holy days, when the most number of people may come together: as well for that the congregation there present may testify the receiving of them that be newly baptized into the number of Christ's Church, as also because in the Baptism of Infants every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his Baptism." The restriction of the sacrament, except in cases of necessity, to these two great festivals is mentioned by Tertullian, S. Jerome, and other early writers; S. Augustine includes the Epiphany among the special seasons so marked. It is obvious, however, that such a rule, however applicable to the case of adult converts to the Faith, could not be enforced where the Church had so far obtained the adhesion of the people that almost all received her initial rites in their infancy. The necessary exceptions in the latter case could not but be so numerous as to obscure, and practically cancel, the rule.

The direction as to the days and times for the administration, laid down in the passage just quoted, still holds its

place in our Prayer-book, and happily is better observed than was even recently the case. In the first half of this century, and even later, a strange idea prevailed that it was "correct" to treat Baptism as a private rite; and for the administration of one of the most solemn and important of the Church's sacraments, it was usual for priest, sponsors, catechumen, and a "select party of friends," to assemble at a day and hour when they were fairly certain to have the church all to themselves. We meet with this peculiar usage still in odd instances, but, like so many other practices of an era happily departed, it is dying out.

It was not formerly customary to consecrate the water for Holy Baptism before each administration of the sacrament, as is the rule of our present Prayer-book; but at intervals, more or less frequent, it was blessed, and retained in the font ready for use. By the Constitutions of Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, issued in 1236, the water was to be renewed weekly; by the Prayer-book of 1549 it was to be changed every month, and Ridley, in his Articles of Inquiry at a visitation of the diocese of London in 1550, demands whether this is done. According to the Scottish office of 1604, the fresh consecration was to take place fortnightly. The Prayer-book of 1552 inserted a prayer corresponding to this benediction in the office itself, although the actual clause for the hallowing of the element was removed, and not replaced until 1662.

Wealthy persons, who could afford the expense of procuring it, have sometimes sent for water from the river Jordan for the baptism of members of their families; from the not unnatural sentiment that no water is so appropriate as that of the stream in which the Saviour Himself submitted

to baptism at the hands of S. John. According to Pennant, a somewhat similar usage was in his time found in North Wales. "If there be a fynnon vair, well of our Lady, or other saint, in the parish," he tells us, "the water that is used for baptism in the font is fetched thence." He goes on to say, that "old women are very fond of washing their eyes with the water after baptism."

A similar superstition exists in Yorkshire concerning the first baptism in a new font, as we have seen to prevail regarding the first interment in a new churchyard; in each it is especially unlucky. The infant first brought to the font is doomed by the old wives of the parish to an early death, an idea probably derived, like others that we have considered, from a tradition of the Pagan custom, whereby new buildings were inaugurated with animal, or even with human, sacrifices.

When the baptism of a child in some family of local importance was to take place, the church was occasionally decorated for the service. Strype tells us how, when the son of Sir Thomas Chamberlayne was christened at S. Benet's, Paul's Wharf, in 1559, "the Church was hung with cloth of arras."

Two garments were of old specially provided against a child's baptism, namely, the bearing cloth and the chrisom. The former was a mantle, handsome according to the means of the donors, who were usually the god-parents, in which the infant was carried to the font. Stowe in his chronicle tells us that at that time (1631) the ordinary gift of the sponsors was "a christening shirt," adorned with silk or blue thread. At Bittersley Court, in Shropshire, an example is preserved; it is of blue satin, embroidered with

silver lace, and enriched with fringes and gold vignettes. Shakespeare in "The Winter's Tale" (Act iii., 3), alludes to this robe; the shepherd, finding the infant Perdita, exclaims "Here's a sight for thee; look thee, a bearing cloth for a squire's child!" The chrisom was a white linen cloth put about the head of the newly baptized, immediately before the anointing with holy oil. The Prayer-book of 1549 has this rubric, following the actual baptism; "Then the Godfathers and Godmothers shall take and lay their hands upon the child, and the minister shall put upon him his white vesture, commonly called the Chrisom, and say—Take this white vesture for a token of the innocency which by God's grace in this holy sacrament of baptism is given unto thee; and for a sign whereby thou art admonished, so long as thou livest, to give thyself to innocency of living, that, after this transitory life, thou mayest be partaker of the life everlasting: Amen." The chrisom was worn seven days, and then was returned to the church, though if the infant died within that time (or, as some say, before the mother's churching), it was buried wrapt in its chrisom. A statute of the Council of Oxford (1222) runs, "Let the *casulae* which are put upon the newly baptized be, from reverence to the sacrament, applied to the use of the Church." The employment of the word *casula*, usually a chasuble, to describe the chrisom is curious. An ecclesiastical canon of uncertain date, but of about the same time as that just quoted, says also "Let the chrismal clothes, which are put upon the newly baptized, be brought to the church, and applied only to ecclesiastical uses." Our old English name for this garment is evidently connected with the anointing with chrism, or holy oil, which followed the infant's investure in it.

From the use of this vesture a newly-baptized child was anciently known as "a chrisom child," a term which occurs several times in our literature. In his "Holy Dying" (chapter i., sec. 2), Jeremy Taylor has this singularly beautiful passage; "Every morning creeps out of a dark cloud, leaving behind it an ignorance and silence deep as midnight, and undiscerned as are the phantoms that made a chrisom-child to smile." Better known are Dame Quickly's words concerning Falstaff's death ("King Henry V.," Act ii., 3), "'A made a finer end, and went away an it had been any christom child."

There is a north country custom which appears to be a reminiscence of the chrisom; namely, to allow the child to sleep the first night after its baptism in the little white cap which it wore at church. These caps were at one time made of a peculiar shape; they had no strings, and left the ears, chin, and forehead bare, so that the wearers could be christened without removing them.

In the early Church it was usual for parents to be sponsors for their own children; S. Augustine, indeed, finds it necessary to point out that this is not an invariable rule. To Boniface he writes, "I would wish you not to remain under the mistake of supposing that the bond of guilt which is inherited from Adam cannot be cancelled in any other way than by the parents themselves presenting their little ones to receive the grace of Christ; for you write: 'As the parents have been the authors of the life which makes them liable to condemnation, the children should receive justification through the same channel, through the faith of the same parents,' whereas you see that many are not presented by parents, but even by any strangers whatever, as

sometimes the infant children of slaves are presented by their masters. Sometimes, also, when their parents are deceased, little orphans are baptized, being presented by those who had it in their power to manifest their compassion in this way. Again, sometimes foundlings, which heartless parents have exposed in order to their being cared for by any passer-by, are picked up by holy virgins, and are presented for baptism by these persons, who neither have, nor desire to have, children of their own."

Feeling, however, so far changed upon this subject that the Council of Mentz, in 815, forbade, by its fifty-fifth canon, parents to act as sponsors for their own children. The idea was, in fact, growing that sponsorship created a kind of spiritual kindred which excluded any other relationship. A synod held in London in 1200, under Archbishop Hubert, decreed that a godson should not contract marriage with the daughter of the person who baptized him, nor with the daughter of his sponsor, born before or after. A quarter of a century later (1225) a provincial synod in Scotland forbade marriage between sponsors for the same child, between persons who had had the same sponsors, and between sponsors and their godchildren.

The Penitential of Egbert, Archbishop of York, issued in 750, ordained that "a man should receive (from the font) a female child, and a woman a male child." It would seem that a custom subsequently arose of unnecessarily multiplying the sponsors, possibly with a view to a greater number of the traditional gifts: for a Legatine Council held at York in 1195, under the aforesaid Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, issued a canon as follows: "We command that in

baptism no more than three persons receive a child from the holy font, namely, two men and one woman for a boy, and two women and one man for a girl"; and again at Oxford in 1222 a synod promulgated a similar decree, which agrees with the existing rule of the Church.

As to the qualifications of sponsors, one of the Capitula made by Ethelred in 994, asserts that "it was anciently decreed" that no one could assume that office unless he at least knew the Creed and the Pater Noster, except he were of such an age that it was hopeless to expect his learning them. The Council of Cealchythe, in 785, had decreed the same thing, and was possibly the ancient authority alluded to; it also adds the following useful reminder: "Let those who receive children from the holy font, and answer for those who cannot speak, for the renouncing of Satan and his works and pomps, and for believing the Faith, know that they are their sureties unto the Lord according to their promise; and when they shall have attained to a competent age, let them teach them the aforesaid Pater Noster and Creed." By a Synod held in London, under S. Anselm, in 1102, monks and nuns were forbidden to be god-parents at baptism.

The twenty-ninth canon of the English Church provides that only communicants can act as god-parents, and also, in accordance with ancient precedent, forbids parents undertaking that office. Its terms are as follows: "No parent shall be urged to be present, nor be admitted to answer as Godfather for his own child; nor any Godfather or Godmother shall be suffered to make any other answer or speech, than by the Book of Common Prayer is prescribed in that behalf: neither shall any person be admitted Godfather or

Godmother to any child at Christening or Confirmation, before the said person so undertaking hath received the holy Communion." The convocation of the Southern Province in 1865 altered this by the omission of the first clause touching parents; but the Northern Province has not interfered with the canon, nor has the amendment referred to been confirmed by Royal Letters Patent.

In some districts of Cornwall it is held to be a sure sign that a young man and woman are, or will be, sweethearts, if they become sponsors, or, in the local phrase, "stand witness together," for the same child. Elsewhere, however, in the same county and in other places, such an act is thought to be fatal to the hopes of lovers; the saying being proverbial, "First at the font, never at the altar." According to a fancy prevalent in Staffordshire and in west Shropshire, if one of the god-parents looks into the font, the infant will grow up to resemble him.

The rule laid down by our Prayer-book as to the age at which infants should be brought to church to be christened, is now more honoured in the breach than in the observance. They are seldom now baptized until the mother can also come to be churched. The rule, however, is that they should be presented on "the first or second Sunday next after their birth, or other Holy-day falling between, unless upon a great and reasonable cause, to be approved by the Curate;" that is, upon the first, or at latest, the second, opportunity. This has been the rubrical direction of each Prayer-book from that of 1549 onwards. By an ancient Northumbrian law, of about 950, every infant was to be christened within nine days of birth, and the omission of this entailed a fine upon the parents; should "the infant

die a pagan" within that time, the parents were bidden to "make satisfaction to God without any earthly mulct," but if beyond that time, a double fine was exacted. By a canon of Edgar, dating about 960, every child was to be brought to the font "within thirty-seven" nights of its birth.

Should there be several candidates for baptism at the same time, it is essential, so they think in Norfolk, that all the boys should first be christened; as otherwise the girls who precede them will infallibly have beards, while the lads will grow up beardless! This is probably a tradition of the established usage in the Church, by which at Confirmation, Communion, and at other times, the males take precedence of the females.

There is of course no question but that the primitive method of baptism was usually, if not universally, by immersion, as is still the rule in the Eastern Church. For a long time efforts were made to enforce this usage in England. The Council of Cealchythe, under Wilfred, Archbishop of York, in 816, reminded priests "that when they administer baptism they ought not to pour the consecrated water upon the infants' heads, but let them always be immersed in the font, as the Son of God Himself afforded an example unto all believers, when He was three times immersed in the river Jordan." A synod at Cashel, in 1172, similarly decreed that children should "be baptized by a three-fold immersion." This "trine immersion," as it is called, was retained in the Prayer-book of 1549; the rubric being: "Then the Priest shall take the child in his hands, and ask the name: and naming the child, shall dip it in the water thrice; first dipping the right side; second the left side; the third time dipping the face toward the font; so it

be discreetly and warily done." A subsequent rubric, however, states that "if the child be weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it." The Prayer-book of 1552 omitted the three-fold immersion, still retaining baptism by immersion, however, with the same exception as in the former book; and so the rubric still stands.

In this connection it may be well to observe that to place in a church a font so small that the directions of the Prayer-book cannot possibly be obeyed, even should the parents desire it, is manifestly a violation of the spirit and intention of the Church. It may also be noticed that the Church knows nothing of "sprinkling," as a form of baptism; if immersion is not employed, affusion, or pouring, is enjoined. The scattering of a few drops of water upon the infant, even if the Sacrament is valid under such circumstances, is not in accordance with the law of the Church.

It is a common superstition that it is unlucky for the child not to cry at the moment of its baptism, the reason being variously given, either that the cry is a sign of the expulsion of the Devil, or that the want of a cry shows the infant to be "too good to live." In the Cornish church of Wellcombe is a door in the north wall, locally known as "the Devil's door," which is opened, at the renunciation in the baptismal service, for the exorcised spirit to take his flight.

In Shropshire it is also considered to be unlucky to mention a child's name until it is announced at the font; the father selects it, as a rule, and keeps it as a secret until the last moment. The stories of quaint, and even extraordinary names are almost endless. Scriptural names were formerly far more popular than they are at the present day, though the names of the most prominent saints in the

Biblical story will probably always maintain their place as common Christian names. In the effort to be original the most unlikely and, for practical everyday use, most inconvenient names have not seldom been selected from the same honoured source. The name Maher-shalal-hash-baz, found in Isaiah viii., 1, has been borne by two men at least in recent times, one resident in Cornwall, and the other in Norfolk; and there have been cases of unfortunate children being condemned to go through life as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. In some districts it was at one time customary to confer the Christian name of the incumbent of a parish upon the first boy brought to the font after his institution. The fashion in names is affected by many things. A loyal regard for the reigning house has always made the names of princes popular among the people; as is illustrated by the common use of George in England since the accession of the House of Hanover. In this connection it will not be altogether out of place to notice the curious aversion that royal families appear to have to the name Thomas. Common as it is among the people, it alone of our more usual names has been held by only a very few princes, and by no sovereign throughout Europe. The only exceptions seem to have been four princes of the House of Plantagenet; namely, Thomas, Earl of Lancaster (son of Henry III.), Thomas, Earl of Norfolk (son of Edward I.), Thomas, Duke of Gloucester (son of Edward III.), and Thomas, Duke of Clarence (son of Henry IV.). A popular book will sometimes give a name a temporary vogue, as is strikingly shown by the number of girls christened Eva, in memory of the heroine of Mrs. Beecher Stowe's celebrated novel, "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

The Puritan custom of using the titles of moral virtues, or even passages of Scripture, as personal names, is well known, and has often been made the subject of satire. To the former class of names Shakespeare has been supposed to allude, when he makes Antonio, in the Tempest (Act ii., 1), say, "Temperance was a delicate wench"; and Taylor, the water poet, refers to the want of harmony too often observable between the character and the name in these cases, when he says—

> "Though bad they be, they will not bate an ace
> To be called Prudence, Temperance, Faith, or Grace."

In one instance a man charged with a name of this kind mounted eventually to the episcopal throne, Dr. Accepted Frewen being consecrated to the See of Lichfield in 1644. Of the other order of names just mentioned, the type is the celebrated Praise-God Barbones, traditionally connected with the Barebones Parliament. In his play, "Bartholomew Fair," Ben Jonson introduces a Puritan pastor of the name of Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, and a woman called Win-the-Fight Littlewit.

Instances are frequently quoted of exceedingly strange names; and nothing is in its way more curious than the fact that, however far-fetched the case may at first seem to be, the mention of it usually produces a crop of parallels. It was but recently that a Church paper drew attention to the registration of a child's baptism by the name Exuperious in the year 1702; when correspondents promptly cited the further examples of one Exuperious Pickering, who died in 1835 at Ruabon, and lies buried in Llandysylo churchyard, and of a graduate of Balliol, Oxford, some thirty years since, named Stephen Exsuperius Wentworth.

* Accepted Frewen was eventually
abp of York 1660-64
Offspring Blackall was Bp of Exeter

The anointing of the newly-baptized infant with consecrated oil is a very ancient usage. The oil, which was blessed for the purpose by the bishop on Maundy Thursday, was compounded of olive oil and balsam. One of the canons of Ælfric, of 970, enjoins the priest to "have consecrated oil of two sorts, one for children (that is, for baptism), and the other for the sick," that is, of course, for extreme unction. This ceremony was retained in the Prayer-book of 1549.

In more than one part of England the idea prevails that baptism is good for the bodies as well as the souls of the infants, and a weakly child is brought to the font with the confident hope that its ailments will disappear after its admission to the Church.

The English synods were very emphatic in declaring that the sacrament of Holy Baptism was to be freely administered. A Legatine Council, held in London in 1126, under John de Crema, issued a canon as follows; "We also charge that no fee whatsoever be exacted for the chrism, baptism, penance, the visitation of the sick, unction, for the communion of the Body of Christ, or for burial;" and this was reiterated by another council at the same place in 1138. A synod at Westminster, in 1173, even more strongly orders that "for communion, chrism, baptism, extreme unction or burial, not a penny, nor any fee must be exacted."

Before closing this chapter a few words may be added concerning Confirmation, which, as being the completion of baptism, may well be included with the initial sacrament of the Church.

Only one superstition appears to have arisen concerning this holy rite; namely, that which holds it to be most unlucky

to have the bishop's left hand only laid upon the head. Where the prelate confirms two candidates at once, as has come to be almost invariably the case, it follows that one of necessity must kneel at his left hand. A case has been known of a Devonshire woman seeking to be confirmed a second time, because of her sinister fortune on the former occasion. The idea though common, is usually vague; in the North, however, the evil is more defined, marriage never being the lot, so they say, of those who had a left-handed Confirmation.

Confirmation was formerly administered at a much earlier age than is now usual with us. A synod at Durham in 1220 orders the suspension from communion of the parents of all unconfirmed children of seven years of age, until such time as they do their duty in that respect. A synod at Exeter in 1287 ordered Confirmation to follow baptism as soon as possible, and "commanded that infants receive that sacrament within three years after their birth." The rubrics of our modern Prayer-book leave the age of the candidate largely to the discretion of the parish priest and the bishop; simply saying that the children must have "come to years of discretion," must be "of competent age," and able to say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Commandments in their mother tongue, and answer the questions of the Catechism. All who have proved their qualifications in these respects are to have their names given by "the Curate" to the bishop at his coming, for his acceptance or rejection. This has been the rule since 1549.

One regulation, often forgotten now, it is to be feared, is that at least one of the god-parents should be present to witness each child's confirmation; the words of the rubric

are, "Then shall they be brought to the Bishop by one that shall be his Godfather, or Godmother, that every child may have a witness of his Confirmation."

It has been held that the baptismal name may be altered, or added to, at Confirmation, by the Bishop's insertion of the new name into the formula pronounced at the laying on of hands; but the claim to have this done is rarely made.

Anciently the rite of Confirmation included anointing with hallowed oil, after which the newly confirmed person's head was bound with a white linen fillet, which he wore for several days. A constitution of Archbishop Reynold, issued at Oxford in 1322, bids the candidates to come fasting, and to see that they brought fillets sufficiently large; it concludes thus, "Also let children who are confirmed be taken to the church the third day after confirmation, that their foreheads may be washed by the priests near the font, from reverence to the chrism; and then let their fillets be all burnt together." Seven days appears to have been the more usual time, however, for keeping the fillet, and the remains of the unction, upon the brow.

Two curious names once in vogue in England for Baptism and Confirmation were *Volowing* and *Bishopping*. The former arose from the priest's instruction to the sponsors to reply "Volo" (I will) to the officiant; the latter came naturally enough from the fact that at Confirmation only did the general mass of the people come in contact with their bishop. Tyndale, in his "Obedience of a Christian Man," published in 1528, says, "Baptism is called *volowing* in many places of England, because the priest saith '*Volo*,' say ye. 'The child was well *volowed*' (say they);

'Yea, and our vicar is as fair a *volower* as ever a priest within twenty miles.'" And again in the "Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue," published by the same writer in 1531, he says that it was not unusual to bring children "to confirmation straight from baptism, so that now oft-times they be volowed and bishopped both in one day."

CHAPTER IX.

Folk-Lore and Customs of Marriage.

THE first formal notice which the Church gets of an approaching wedding is, of course, by the first publication of the banns; and with a note or two on this subject our chapter on marriage-lore must therefore commence.

From the primitive ages the Church has used every endeavour to prevent clandestine marriages, lest they should be contracted improperly, or subsequently be improperly renounced. Various methods have been used to ensure publicity in different times and places; but a formal notification to the faithful assembled in church of the intended union has been the approved plan in England for many centuries.

The eleventh canon of the Council of London, in 1200, has a clause to this effect, "Let not persons be married till a threefold proclamation has been publicly made in the church, unless by the special authority of the bishop;" the Constitutions of Archbishop Reynold, dated 1322, also insisted upon the publication of banns "upon three Sundays or festivals distant from each other." Complaint having been made that the bishop's licenses were frequently issued, unwittingly, to persons to whose marriage there were legal objections, Convocation in 1460 proposed that two publications should be made compulsory before even a license should be granted.

The law of the Church in England is now that banns be published on "three several Sundays." The Council of Trent orders the publication on three successive festivals.

The word *banns* is strictly a "proclamation," being connected with an Aryan root meaning to "speak clearly." Two other words were anciently used in England for banns of marriage, namely, *spurrings* and *sibrit*. The former means "asking," being related to the Danish *sporge*, and found commonly in Scottish, in its original sense, in the form *speer*. Sibrit, which appears also as *sibbered*, *sybrede*, and *sibberidge*, was very early employed in this connection; strictly it means "relationship," or affinity; and hence came to mean a proclamation, or an enquiry, concerning affinity. A curious cant phrase, used in several parts of the country, as in such distant counties as York and Pembroke, is "falling over the pulpit," which is locally understood to imply having the banns published; but the origin and the actual meaning of the saying do not seem to be known.

It is not unnatural that the bride expectant should feel a certain virgin shyness about hearing her own name and her lover's openly announced in church; it is therefore not strange that she should almost invariably avoid being present at the publication of her banns. In the North of England, however, something more than maiden modesty is alleged in defence of her conduct; it is held to be absolutely unlucky for her to hear the publication, her presence rendering it probable that any offspring vouchsafed to her will be deaf and dumb. In the parish of Wellow, Nottinghamshire, a pretty custom existed until quite recent times for someone, selected for the duty by the parish clerk, to rise in his place as soon as the banns were published and to say aloud,

"God speed them well," to which clerk and congregation audibly responded "Amen." A curious fancy exists in some places that it is unlucky, or as some would say even illegal, for banns to be published on Sundays, some of which are in one year and some in another, as on the last of December and the first two in January. In Perthshire, even if the Sundays are in different quarters of the year, it is held to be ill-omened. There is certainly no foundation for the doubt as to the legality of such a publication. Another superstition in connection with banns is that, should a death-bell toll for a married woman on the same day on which the banns are published for the last time, the prospective bride will not live beyond a twelvemonth. This is a South Lincolnshire belief; and a case happened in 1888 which quite confirmed the local "old wives" in it.

To have banns of marriage duly published and not subsequently to proceed to the solemnization of matrimony, was of old considered a slight upon those who had been called upon to make, or to hear, the proclamation; and it was commonly spoken of as "mocking the Church." Fines were frequently exacted for such conduct. The following extract from the record of the Archdeacon of Lincoln's visitation in 1636, shows that Church censures were sometimes administered in such cases: "William Ingoles of Skirbecke quarter and Hanna Moule: p[resented]: for being publiquly asked in the Church 3 several Sundayes or holydayes beinge 6 weekes since and not p'ceedinge to marriage according to y^e^ Lawes Cannons and Constitutions Eccli'all of this Church of England."

Forbidding the banns takes place from time to time in

scattered instances, usually on the ground of the youth of one of the parties, occasionally on that of their too near relationship; but this is so rare an occurrence as always to create some little sensation when it happens. Of old, banns were sometimes forbidden upon public, as well as private, grounds, and that in a most formal way; as witness the following quaint extract from the parish register of Frampton, Lincolnshire, for 1653. "The intentions of a marridg betweenne Edward Morten who hath beene some tyme in our Towne of Frampton & Jane Goodwin daughter of John Goodwin & . . . . his wife of our sayd Towne, were three several Lord's dayes published in our parish church here, viz.t on Dec.r 18th & on Dec.r 25th & on Jan. 1 in ye yeare of or Lord 1653 & John Ayre & Thomas Appleby & Wm. Eldred in behalfe of ymselves & other of ye inhabitants did object yse two things against ye marridg first yt although ye sayd Edward Morten did live lately some short tyme as a servant wth John Rowles of Algarkirke as they are informed, and since hath come and beene wth John Goodwin of our Towne of Frampton, yet they neyther know nor can learne where he has liv'd before yt tyme, nor what hee is whether a marryed or single man and therefore they desyred that his marriage might bee deferr'd till such time as hee brought a certificate of yse things. And secondly they did object that for ought they know and as they verily believ'd hee was a very poore man & yt hee had not then any house to live in, & therefore they did desyre yt he might ere hee wur married get some sufficient man to bee bound wth him to secure ye Towne from any charge by him or his, whom they consider they were not bound to keepe, hee being till hee lately crept into ye foresay'd poore man John Goodwin (father of ye

foresay'd Jane) his house a poore strang^r to us. These things were certifyed & are here recorded by mee.

Samuel Cony, Register of Frampton."*

In face of his opposition, Edward Morten may well have thought there was something in the belief, above alluded to, as to the unluckiness of banns published partly in one, and partly in another, quarter of the year.

The banns of marriage having been duly published, and "no impediment" having been alleged, the next important consideration is the date of "the happy day"; and in the choice of this there are several questions to be considered. There are first sundry seasons during which by ancient Canon Law—still in force, though frequently ignored—marriage is prohibited. The chief Church fasts are obviously unsuited to the celebration of wedding festivities; and a reverence for the sacred mysteries commemorated, led to their being forbidden within the octaves of the great festivals. In accordance with this, the Constitutions for the diocese of Sodor, drawn up in 1291, declare, "We forbid any priest to celebrate a marriage from (the beginning of) Lent to the octave of Easter." The full rule is given in the Sarum Missal, and includes the solemn seasons of Advent, Lent, and Rogationtide, with the following festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide; so that the year was mapped out in the method set forth in a note found in the register at Norton; "Marriage comes in on the 13th of January, and at Septuagesima Sunday it is out again until Low Sunday, at which time it comes in again and goes not out till Rogation Sunday, thence it is forbidden until

* *Lincolnshire Notes and Queries*, vol. i., p. 109 (1889).

Trinity Sunday, thence it is unforbidden till Advent, and comes not in again till the 13th of January." The first and last dates here given are, of course, that of the octave of the Epiphany; throughout the statement the days named are included in the times forbidden, the seasons lawful for marriage commencing on the morrow and ending on the eve in each case. In many parts of the country one of these prohibited seasons is recalled in a popular saying,

> "If you marry in Lent
> You'll live to repent."

In the North of England there is a jingle which allocates to each day in the week a certain measure of good or ill-fortune, as a result of the marriage contracted upon it :—

> "Monday for wealth,
> Tuesday for health,
> Wednesday the best day of all ;
> Thursday for losses,
> Friday for crosses,
> And Saturday no luck at all."

It is noticeable that in this rhyme a wedding upon Sunday is not contemplated at all, yet that day was at one time fashionable for such events, especially in London and the South of England. In "The Taming of the Shrew" (Act ii., 1) Baptista says,

> "On Sunday next, you know,
> My daughter Katherine is to be married :
> Now, on the Sunday following shall Bianca
> Be bride to you, if you make this assurance ;
> If not, to Signior Gremio."

There are other illustrations of this fact in the Elizabethan dramatists.

The inauspicious character ascribed to Thursday is said

to arise from our Teutonic forefathers, after their conversion to the Faith, looking upon Thor as but one of the manifestations of Satan.

Friday, the weekly commemoration of the world's great tragedy, the Crucifixion, is unlucky for all undertakings; and consequently for weddings especially. "Friday is a cross day for marriage," says the Cornishman; and probably both his proverb and the lines above quoted are intended to contain an allusion to the Cross, whose shadow darkens that day.

In Scotland, and indeed throughout the Border country, the whole month of May is regarded as singularly inauspicious for weddings; the old saying being,

"Marry in May,
Rue for aye."

This idea is derived from the superstitions of Pagan Rome, where both February and May, together with the Kalends, Nones, and Ides of every month, were considered to be unsuitable for matrimony.

The day having been satisfactorily and auspiciously chosen, we may turn our attention to the bridal party; and note who should be present in the church, and after what fashion. For the bride herself, who of course claims priority of place, tradition has settled various matters with regard to the fitting attire for this crisis in her life. Everything green in colour must be rigorously excluded; Scotsmen say, because it is the fairies' favourite hue, and they would be jealous if earthly brides affected it. The poet Wordsworth was either ignorant of this prejudice, which is found almost everywhere, or careless of it, when he made one of his characters

"put on her gown of green,
And leave her mother at sixteen,
To follow Peter Bell."

White, by an old and widespread tradition, is the popular ideal for a bridal dress; and its suggestion of happiness and of maiden purity should make it specially appropriate; but it does not seem to be actually prescribed by any of the unwritten laws of the people. The chief positive direction on the matter is that the bride must don

"Something old, something new,
Something borrowed, and something blue."

It was of old the custom for her to wear her hair unbound and unbraided, flowing freely upon her shoulders. The Princess Elizabeth Stuart, at her marriage with the Palatine on S. Valentine's Day, 1613, is recorded to have had "her hair dishevelled and hanging down her shoulders." Shakespeare alludes to this fashion when he puts into Constance's mouth ("King John," Act iii., 1) the words,

"O Lewis, stand fast! The devil tempts thee here,
In likeness of a new untrimmed bride."

It has been suggested that the bridal veil is nothing but a milliner's substitute for this natural covering of ungirt locks; but it is more probably derived from the cloth or canopy anciently held over the contracting parties during part of the service, as is still the usage in Russia. The use of this covering is perhaps derived from Jewish sources, and it is still found, under the name of the *Taleth*, in use among the modern Jews. In the pre-Reformation missals it is called a *pallium*; and there are directions for it to be held above the heads of the bridal pair, as they prostrate themselves at the altar to receive the nuptial benediction.

The use of orange-blossom for the adornment of the bride is not a very old practice. Flowers of various kinds were generally employed largely at weddings, strewn on the floor, wrought into nosegays, or in other ways; but it is obvious that the bloom of a plant which blossoms only under exceptional circumstances in England, can never have been used in a truly national or popular way.

Under certain circumstances it has been thought prudent for a bride to appear at church in a much more primitive costume than all this arrangement of white robes, and veils, and flowers; in fact brides have stood at the altar in the least possible clothing that decency, and less than comfort, required. It was an old idea that a husband, whose wife at her marriage was clothed only in a sheet, or in the most elementary linen garment, was not in any way liable for the debts previously contracted by her. Our parish registers and local traditions give us ample illustrations of this quaint idea. At Chiltern All Saints', Wiltshire, is the following entry: "John Bridmore and Anne Selwood were married October 17th, 1714, the aforesaid Anne Selwood was married in her smock, without any clothes or headgier on." Similar cases occurred at Gorton Green in 1738, at Ashton-under-Lyne in 1771, and at Otley in 1808. *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* for 1797 vouches for an extraordinary story, according to which a bride disrobed in the vestry, and appeared at the altar without even the amount of clothing worn by the ladies in the above cases. The latest example of which the present writer knows comes from Lincolnshire. The register of Gedney has this commonplace entry; "Decr. 2nd, 1842, David Wilkinson, full age, bachelor, labourer, of Gedney," to "Susan Farran, full age, widow, of

Gedney." Local tradition supplements this brief account by relating that the bride was dressed in a sheet, stitched about her, with holes cut for the passage of her bare arms. The idea of this singular custom evidently was, that the husband took the person of the wife only, and received with her no "worldly goods" whatever; for there is one case on record, as taking place at Whitehaven in 1766, where the bride stript in this fashion before the marriage ceremony, in order that her estate should not be liable for the husband's debts. In London, to judge by a wedding that was performed in February, 1723, the same end was gained by somewhat more seemly means. It was held sufficient if the bride, having shown herself at church in sheet or shift, was before the ceremony clothed in garments which notoriously had been purchased, not by her, but by the bridegroom. It is rather noteworthy that so many of these brides, in their eagerness to assume the dignity of wives, were quite regardless of their personal comfort; for in several instances they chose most unpropitious seasons for appearing thus lightly clad on the flagstones of a church floor. The buxom widow of Gedney dared the weather of the 2nd December: and the other cases quoted mostly took place in the spring or autumn. Mary Gee, of Gorton Green, more prudently chose to be married in this simple guise on June 25th.

It has been usual, time out of mind, for a maiden to be accompanied to the altar by one or more of her maiden friends: but no girl must perform this friendly office too frequently, for the idea is almost universal that she who has been thrice a bridesmaid will never be a bride. During the procession of the company to the church, the old English

custom was for the bridegroom to go first, led by two maidens, and for two men or boys to follow escorting the bride. Waldron, describing the nuptial ceremonies of the Isle of Man in 1726, tells us that "they have Bride-men and Bride-maids, who lead the young couple, as in England, only with this difference, that the former have ozier-wands in their hands, as an emblem of superiority; they are preceded by musick, who play all the while before them the tune *The Black and the Grey*, and no other ever is used at weddings."

The one person who, by popular superstition, is debarred from attendance at a wedding, is, strange to say, the bride's mother. The father is sometimes present at a rural wedding to "give away the bride," but not frequently, that office being more commonly assigned to the girl's brother; but the mother's presence is held to be absolutely unlucky. This curious fancy is confined to no one district of the country; it is found in Durham, in Shropshire, in Essex, and in Suffolk, and no doubt in other counties also. The presence of a widow at church, as one of the wedding party, is also deemed inauspicious.

In Shropshire it is considered to be lucky for the "best man," and even for the so-called bridesmaid, to be married. This universal custom of providing an escort for "the happy pair" is alleged to be a survival of the barbarian practice of "wife-capture;" a fact which was more obvious a century or two ago, when, as just stated, the groom's-men brought the bride to church. It was then usual for the lady to be taken by her male escort by each hand, and actually led, as if unwilling, to the church; so in the "Scornful Lady," of Beaumont and Fletcher, the heroine asks, "Were these two

arms encompassed with the hands of batchelors to lead me to the Church?"

In anticipation of the arrival of the bridal procession, the church was adorned with flowers, and the path and aisle strewn with fresh rushes. William Browne, in "Britannia's Pastoral" (i., 2), published in 1613, thus describes these preparations:—

> "Full many maids, clad in their best array
> In honour of the bride, come with their flaskets,
> Fill'd full with flowers; others in wicker baskets
> Bring from the marish rushes to o'erspread
> The ground whereon to church the lovers tread."

Wheat ears, the common symbal of plenty and prosperity, seem occasionally to have been mingled with the rest; since we read in Rowe's "Happy Village," published in the beginning of the last century,—

> "The wheaten ear was scatter'd near the porch,
> The green bloom blossom'd strew'd the way to church."

Formerly the first portion of the wedding service was performed in the church-porch. The first rubric in the Order for Matrimony in the Sarum Missal begins, "Let the man and woman be placed before the door of the church, or in the face of the Church, before the presence of God, the Priest, and the people;" and after the completion of the espousals, a further rubric says, "Here let them go into church, to the step of the Altar." The Prayer-book of 1549 altered this, and each subsequent edition has but followed its rubrics in this respect, ordering "the persons to be married to come into the body of the Church with their friends and neighbours;" the priest and clerks, with the man and woman, being subsequently directed, as in the

older rite, to go up to the altar. The principal door of the church is generally opened for the bridal company to enter, and, according to a Yorkshire tradition, they must be careful to leave by the same; since to come in by one entrance and to go out by another will infallibly entail lifelong misfortune.

Much folk-lore of various kinds has gathered round the little circlet of gold, which fills so interesting a place in the wedding ceremonial. In attempting to trace out the history of the wedding-ring, it is difficult to escape from the confusion which is caused by the amalgamation of the betrothal and the matrimonial rites in one service. Anciently the former was a formal act, entirely distinct from the marriage, yet scarcely less solemn and binding; and the giving and receiving of a ring formed an important part of the ceremony. The wedding-ring, as distinct from the betrothal-ring, came into use about the tenth century; although there are passages in writings much earlier than that date which seem to allude to it. Even at the beginning of the third century we find Tertullian, in his *Apologeticus* (chapter vi.), writing of a time "when a woman had yet known no gold upon her save on the finger, which with the bridal ring *(pronubo annulo)* her husband had sacredly pledged to himself." Remembering, however, the sacred character of the ancient betrothal, to which marriage added little except a solemn ratification, with the benediction of the Church, it is not difficult to imagine that in this, and similar passages, the betrothal emblem is really meant.

The practice of confining the wedding-ring to a simple band of gold is comparatively modern, our forefathers exercising a wider choice in the matter. Some rings were

enriched with gems; others were in the form of the familiar symbol of eternity, the coiled snake; on yet others the figure of a favourite saint, and especially of S. Margaret, the protectress of women in childbirth, was engraved. In Tudor times the practice was almost universal of engraving some motto, or "posy," on a wedding-ring. In Herrick's "Hesperides" there is an allusion to this pretty custom, in the lines:—

> "What posies for our wedding rings,
> What gloves we'll give and ribbonings."

Shakespeare has several references to it, though with respect to love-tokens rather than to wedding-rings. In "The Merchant of Venice" (Act v., 1) Gratiano tells Portia that he has quarrelled with Nerissa—

> "About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
> That she did give me; whose posy was
> For all the world like cutler's poetry
> Upon a knife, 'Love me, and leave me not,'"

Hamlet again (Act iii., 2) asks:—

> "Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?"

And yet once more Jaques, in "As You Like It" (Act iii., 2), says to Orlando:—

> "You are full of pretty answers; have you not been acquainted with goldsmiths' wives, and conned them out of rings?"

So usual were rings of this kind, that some ingenious individual put forth a little collection of suitable mottoes, to aid those whose originality was not equal to their composition. This book, which was published in 1624, is entitled, "Love's Garland, or Posies for Rings, Handkerchers, and Gloves, and such pretty Tokens that Lovers send their Loves."

The following are a few extracts from the specimens given :—

"All perfect love
Is from above.
In trust
Be just.
Be true to me
As I to thee.
To me till death
As deare as breath.
No crosse so strange
My love shall change.
In thee a flame
In me the same."

Other mottoes that have been found on English wedding, or betrothal, rings are as follows :—

"Constancy and heaven are round,
And in this the Emblem's found.
Weare me out, Love shall not waste :
Love beyond Tyme still is plac'd.
Our contract
Was Heaven's act.
Not two but one
Till life be done.
In thee my choice
I do rejoice."

Before the Reformation the wedding-ring was put on in a more ceremonious way than is now enjoined. The ring having been blessed by the priest, and sprinkled with holy water as it lies "upon a dish or book," the directions for the investiture of the bride with it are, in the Sarum Missal, as follows: "Then let the Bridegroom put the ring on the thumb of the Bride, saying—In the Name of the Father; (on the first finger) and of the Son; (on the second finger) and of the Holy Ghost; (on the third finger) Amen. And

there let him leave it, because in that finger there is a certain vein which reaches to the heart." The reason here given for the choice of the ring-finger is a very old one. Wheatley, in his work on the Book of Common Prayer, says of it, "This is now contradicted by experience, but several eminent authors, as well Gentiles as Christians, as well physicians as divines, were formerly of the opinion, and therefore they thought this finger the properest to bear the pledge of love, that from thence it might be conveyed, as it were, to the heart."

Rings of various metals beside gold have been used for the nuptial emblem in past days; silver, iron, and steel all had their specially appropriate significations; even brass and leather have been employed. In more than one case, owing to the poverty or the forgetfulness of the bridegroom, the bowl of the church door-key has been pressed into the service, and has been placed on the bride's fourth finger to do temporary duty as a wedding-ring. A canon of the Synod of Durham (1220) contains the words, "Let not the marriage ring be made of rushes, or of other vile materials." A custom seems at one time to have existed, to which allusion may here be made, of performing some kind of mock marriage—without, of course, any countenance from the Church—in which a rush ring was substituted for the usual metal one; and the union thus formed was probably dissolved as readily as such a ring could be snapt. Everyone will recall, in this connection, the lines in the well-known song of "The Mad Shepherdess" (or "My lodging is on the cold ground"),—

> "I'll crown thee with a garland of straw then,
> And I'll marry thee with a rush ring."

This occurs in Davenant's play, "The Rivals," produced in 1668, but is probably a much older composition. In the old ballad, "The Winchester Wedding," are the lines—

> "And Tommy was loving to Kitty,
> And wedded her with a rush ring."

Shakespeare perhaps has a reference to some such usage in the Clown's words in "All's Well that Ends Well" (Act ii., 2), "As fit as Tib's rush for Tom's forefinger." William Tyndale also seems to glance at the practice in a passage in his "Exposition of the First Epistle of S. John." "The Jew," he says, "could believe no words, though an angel had spoken, without a token; . . . and likewise whatsoever they were bid to do, they must have had a token of remembrance, though it had been but a ring of a rush."

The use of the wedding-ring was one of the ceremonies strongly objected to by the extreme Reformers, and by the Puritans of the Stuart era. Thomas Sampson and Laurence Humphrey, two Reformers who were in frequent correspondence with the fanatical Protestants of Geneva, write to Henry Bullinger in 1566 a querulous letter, full of lamentations over the "popish" practices still in vogue, and among the rest they say, "Solemn betrothing takes place after the popish method and rites, by the ring."

As to the objections of the Puritans, Butler tells in "Hudibras" (Part iii., 2) of some who

> "were for abolishing
> That tool of matrimony, a ring;
> With which th' unsanctified bridegroom
> Is marry'd only to a thumb;
> (As wise as ringing of a pig,
> That us'd to break up ground, and dig)
> The bride to nothing but her will,
> That nulls the after marriage still."

Other satirists of the time point their shafts against the same place in the Puritans' attack upon the Church. In "A Long-Winded Lay Lecture," published in 1674, are the following lines :—

> "Because the wedding-ring's a fashion old,
> And signifies by the purity of gold
> The purity required in th' married pair,
> And by the rotundity the union fair,
> Which ought to be between them endless; for
> No other reason, we that use abhor."

Again, in a collection of "Loyal Songs," is one entitled "A Curtain Lecture," in which is the following passage :—

> "They will not hear of wedding-rings,
> For to be us'd in their marriage;
> But say they're superstitious things,
> And do religion much disparage;
> They are but vain, and things profane,
> Wherefore now no wit bespeaks them,
> So to be ty'd unto the bride,
> But do it as the spirit moves them."

One such objector was Thomas Cartwright, who, in his controversy with Archbishop Whitgift, writes, "They use yet a sacramental sign to which they attribute the virtue of wedlock, I mean the wedding-ring, which they foully abuse and dally withal, in taking it up and laying it down; in putting it on they abuse the name of the Trinity." Hooker, dealing with the Puritans of his own day, observes that "The ring hath been always used as an especial pledge of faith and fidelity: nothing more fit to serve as a token of our purposed endless continuance in that which we never ought to revoke."

It is esteemed exceedingly unlucky if the wedding-ring be suffered to drop to the ground during the service; in some parts of Shropshire it is supposed that which ever of the

bridal couple was so unfortunate as to drop it, will be the first of the two to die. It is, of course, everywhere considered ominous if the lady takes off the ring, and specially so should she break it, or lose it. The natural wearing away of the little circlet is variously interpreted. One proverb makes it a happy indication, for it declares

> "As your wedding-ring wears,
> You'll outlive your cares."

But should the process proceed so far that the slender line snaps, it is held to fortell the speedy release of the twain from that vow, which they promised to keep "till death did them part." Usually it is supposed that the husband's death is foreshadowed. A curious idea formerly existed among the less educated folk of Oswestry, that if a husband failed to maintain his wife, she could free herself entirely from the nuptial bond, and marry again, by the simple process of returning her ring to her partner.

At one time it was not unusual to present rings to the friends and neighbours in commemoration of a wedding. Anthony à Wood relates of Edward Kelly, the alchymist, who died in 1595, that "Kelly, who was openly profuse beyond the modest limits of a sober philosopher, did give away in gold wire rings (or rings twisted with three gold wires) at the marriage of one of his maid-servants, to the value of £4,000."

In some parts of Ireland it is supposed that the contract is invalid if anything but a gold ring be used; and consequently, to accommodate the poor, rings of that precious metal may be had on hire for the occasion; or the priest keeps one, which is used for all who are not provided with a ring of their own.

The modern Prayer-book bids the bridegroom lay upon the priests' book not only the ring, but also "the accustomed duty to the Priest and Clerk." In the book of 1549 these latter offerings were spoken of as "other tokens of spousage, as gold and silver"; and the Sarum Missal, having similarly ordered the placing of "gold, silver and a ring on a dish or book," explains that "by the purity of the silver is signified the inward affection which ought ever to be fresh between" the married pair. It is to be regretted that the almost universal neglect of this portion of the present rubric has suffered this relic of a very ancient custom to be forgotten; it would appear, however, that such neglect is by no means recent, for Hooker, in explaining the origin of the usage, speaks of its lapse as already visible. "The custom of laying down money," so he tells us, "seemeth to have been derived from the Saxons, whose manner was to buy their wives: but seeing that there is not any great cause wherefore the memory of that custom should remain, it skilleth not much although we suffer it to lie dead, even as we see it in a manner already worn out."

Hooker, in a subsequent paragraph, answers the criticism which had been levelled against the word "worship," as used in the bridegroom's declaration in delivering the ring to the bride, "With my body I thee worship." As the expression is still sometimes cavilled at, it will not be out of place to add a note here on the subject. Cartwright, in his controversy with Whitgift, absurdly alleges that "they make the new-married man according to the popish form to make an idol of his wife, saying, 'With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship.'" Whitgift and Hooker, of course, both point out that the term means 'honour,' and does not

necessarily there, or elsewhere, imply divine honour. Of this original and correct meaning of 'worship' we have still several familiar examples. In Holy Scripture, for instance, we read how "all the congregation . . . bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord, and the King" (1 Chron. xxix., 20); again of the unforgiving servant in the Saviour's parable (S. Matt. xviii., 26) it is related that "he fell down and worshipped" his lord; and yet again, also in the Saviour's words (S. Luke xiv., 10), he who humbles himself "shall have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat" with him. The word itself is but another form of *worthship*, and implies "to treat as worthy," and hence "to honour"; thus the formal titles of the "Right Honourable the Lord Mayor," and of "His Worship the Mayor," are not so dissimilar as they appear. The whole of the solemn declarations of the bride and bridegroom are almost word for word those which occurred in the pre-Reformation services; where, although the office was in the Latin tongue, the promises and vows of the contracting parties were naturally in the vernacular.

An idea at one time prevailed in rural districts that it was a proper, if not an essential, part of the ceremony that the priest should, at the conclusion, kiss the bride. This was no doubt a reminiscence of the kiss of peace as given at the nuptial mass, but altered in the tradition; since it is the bridegroom, and not, according to this less seemly fancy, the priest, who salutes the bride. The rubric in the Sarum Missal is very clear. After the *Agnus Dei*, the *pallium*, or nuptial canopy, is removed from above the heads of the married couple, and then the direction runs as follows; "Let the Bridegroom and the Bride rise, and let the

Bridegroom receive the Peace from the Priest and give it to the Bride, kissing her, and no one else; but let the Clergy receive the Peace from the Priest, and pass it on to the rest after the accustomed manner." Marston, in his "Insatiate Countess," published in 1613, has an allusion to this nuptial kiss in the words,

> "The kiss thou gav'st me in the church, here take."

Shakespeare describing, through Gremio, the boisterous conduct of Petruchio at his wedding with Katharine ("Taming of the Shrew," Act iii., 2), says,

> "He took the bride about the neck,
> And kiss'd her lips with such a clamorous smack,
> That, at the parting, all the church did echo;"

and again he makes Richard II. (Act v., 1), on hearing of his separation from his queen, exclaim,

> "Doubly divorc'd! Bad men, ye violate
> A two-fold marriage; 'twixt my crown and me,
> And then betwixt me and my wedded wife.
> Let me unkiss the oath 'twixt thee and me;
> And yet not so, for with a kiss 'twas made."

A celebration of the Holy Eucharist, at which the bride and bridegroom were communicants, formed the conclusion of the marriage service, not only in pre-Reformation times, but by the rubrics of the Prayer-books of 1549, and even of 1552; in both of which it is stated, "The new married persons (the same day of their marriage) must receive the Holy Communion." The present book contents itself with saying that "it is convenient" for them so to do.

Among other wedding superstitions is one, commonly held, that it is unlucky, if the bride, in taking her husband's surname, does not also alter her initials; or, as it runs in rhyme—

"If you change the name and not the letter,
You change for the worse and not for the better."

It is, on the other hand, a very happy omen if the new initials spell some word.

At Whitburn, near Sunderland, a unique custom exists in connection with weddings. Friends of the newly-made husband and wife send pots of a hot compounded beverage to meet the party as it comes out of church; the bridegroom first tastes each pot, and passes it to the bride; after which all the party in turn drink. In some instances this must be a lengthy process, and one not a little trying to the partakers; for at a wedding some half-century ago, as many as forty pots are said to have awaited the appearance of a popular couple. This looks very like a degenerated relic of an ancient usage. At the conclusion of the nuptial mass according to the Sarum use, we find the following rubric: "After Mass let bread and wine, or any liquid, be blessed, and let them drink it in the name of the Lord." This was perhaps originally merely for the sustenance of the wedded pair, who, as they had communicated, had of course been fasting up to this time. There are many allusions to this practice in our literature. In that passage in "the Taming of the Shrew" (Act iii., 2) already referred to, we are told how Petruchio

"quaff'd off the muscadel,
And threw the sops all in the sexton's face."

In Dekker's "Satiro-Mastix" (1602) we read, "When we are at church bring the wine and cakes." At Wilsdon, according to an inventory of 1547, there were kept in the church two masers "for to drynke in at bride-ales." Many

other references might be adduced to this once familiar practice.

In the sanctuary of Jarrow Church, Northumberland, is a time-worn chair, traditionally, and not improbably, known as that of the Venerable Bede. This formerly stood in the vestry; and every bride, when the party retired thither for the signing of the register, was careful to seat herself in the old oak chair, as thereby she ensured her own becoming the "joyful mother of children."

Another north country custom, now probably almost, if not quite, extinct, is the use of "the petting stone." This was a stone raised on two others so as to form a barrier across the church-porch, or in the churchyard path, over which the bridal party had to leap. It was supposed to test the bride's willingness to follow her husband even through difficulties. Sometimes, however, it took the form of a long stone, on which the bride had to mount, and endeavour to step from end to end at a stride, her inability to accomplish which was ominous of future unhappiness.

Music has been from time immemorial an important adjunct to the joyousness of a wedding solemnity. Bride and groom were escorted to and from the church with instrumental music, and the office itself gathered added dignity and brightness from both vocal and instrumental melody. Hymen, in "As You Like It" (Act v., 4), speaks of "wedlock hymns;" and Capulet, at the supposed death of Juliet ("Romeo and Juliet," Act iv., 5) on the eve of her wedding, declares that the "solemn hymns to sullen dirges change." Nothing could surpass the quaintness of the following account of wedding music, which occurs in Vernon's "Hunting of Purgatory to Death," published in

1561 :—"I knewe a priest (this is a true tale that I tell you, and no lye), whiche, when any of his parishioners should be maryed, woulde take his backe-pype, and go fetche theym to the churche, playnge sweetelye afore them, and then would he laye his instrument handsomely upon the aultare till he had maryed them and sayd masse; which thyng being done, he would gentillye bringe them home agayne with back-pype."

CHAPTER X.

The Chancel and the Choir.

FROM primitive times it has been usual to divide the interiors of churches into sections, increasing in sanctity as one advances eastward. In the outer courts, and, for some parts of the services, in the lower portions of the nave, even heretics and heathen were suffered to stand to hear the preaching of the faith; beyond them the faithful in full enjoyment of the privileges of the Church had their places; but beyond even these lay the sacred enclosure within which only the clergy might enter. This was anciently variously named. It was the *bema*, a word sometimes meaning the lectern, sometimes the raised bench of seats for the priests, and sometimes the part of the church in which both these were situated; it was the *sacrarium* or sanctuary, as corresponding with the Sanctum Sanctorum of the older Dispensation; it was the *thusiasterion*, the place of the altar, the word strictly meaning the altar itself; it was the *presbytery*, or place of the priests; and yet further it was named *adyta*, the place inaccessible to the laity. None of these titles have been brought into use among us as descriptive of this section of the church, although we employ *sacrarium*, and less frequently *presbytery*, to indicate the section within the altar-rails. Two other expressions, however, have early authority, and are still familiar to us. The fourth Council of Toledo, held in 633, in its seventeenth canon, bids the

priests and deacons to communicate before the altar, the clerks, or inferior clergy, within the choir (*in choro*), and the people outside the choir. Again, Eusebius of Cæsarea, who flourished about 315, tells us that, in the church built by Paulinus, the extremity containing the altar "was divided from the rest by certain rails of wood, curiously and artificially wrought into the form of network, to render it inaccessible to the multitude;" and from this network barrier, of which this is our earliest instance, called in Latin *cancelli*, we get our modern name chancel.

The idea that the whole congregation has a right to see everything which goes on within the chancel—an idea which has led in not a few cases to the mutilation, or even the destruction, of chancel screens—is certainly not primitive; for it was an early custom not only to fence off this sacred enclosure from the approach of the laity, but also to veil it from their gaze. The Eastern Church, the most conservative portion of Christendom, still shuts in the chancel with a solid screen pierced only by "the Holy Gates," which are closed and curtained at the most sublime portions of the holy mysteries. Similarly Synesius (about 410) speaks of "the mystical veils," S. Chrysostom (about 398) and Evagrius (about 594) of "the folding doors," and S. Athanasius (about 330) of "the hangings"; all of them referring to the same thing, namely, the screen, impenetrable to the eyes of the people, which separated the chancel from the nave. Such ponderous stone screens, pierced only by a central arch for gates, as we see in the cathedrals of York, Lincoln, and elsewhere, are so far from being the outcome of "the dark ages" that they are distinctly primitive in idea, if not in form.

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL.

We will not, however, spend time here considering the rood-screen and its statuary, the great crucifix with its attendant figures of the Blessed Virgin-mother and S. John, beyond saying that in mediæval days almost all English churches were provided with this imposing structure, or at least with a beam carrying the three figures, forming a fitting entrance to the most sacred portion of the House of God; and that in not a few churches, both in towns and in villages, its use has now been restored.* Beneath this loft let us pass within the chancel itself.

During the celebration of divine service the laity were rigidly excluded from this section of the church, although there is evidence that the right to occupy some part of it was often claimed by the wealthier or the more powerful parishioners. The Constitutions of Bishop Walter, of Durham, in 1255, bid "rectors and others to prevent laymen from sitting or standing in the chancel during the celebration of mass, unless they be patrons of the churches, or unless some venerable person be admitted out of respect." A Provincial Council in Scotland in 1225 promulgated a canon to this effect, "Let not laymen presume to sit or stand among the clerks about the altar, while the holy mysteries are celebrating, except our lord the King and the nobility of the realm." Again in 1230 among sundry articles of enquiry in the diocese of Lincoln, it is asked "Whether any of the laity persist in standing in the chancel with the clergy." From the days of the Revolution down to recent times, an era as ignorant of ecclesiastical usages as it was, for the

* For further notice of the rood-loft, its uses, destruction, and restoration, the reader is referred to the author's "The Cross in Ritual, Architecture, and Art" (Andrews & Co.).

most part, careless of them, the chancels of our churches were in many instances blocked with high pews, which reached almost to the very steps of the altar. We have now substituted almost throughout the country another and far more seemly custom, but one which, in the case of ordinary parish churches, is almost as far removed from the methods of our ancestors. For it is certainly a mistake to suppose that the long lines of white-robed choristers are really a revival of an ancient usage in the bulk of our parish churches. "Choirs and places where they sing" meant, in mediæval times, cathedral and collegiate churches, but did not include the ordinary parish churches. The chancel was thus anciently reserved for the exclusive use of the clergy and the assistant ministers at the altar, with the addition, in churches having a capitular body, of such singers as were provided for on the foundation.

Much may be said on behalf of our more modern usage, but it must be admitted that the tendency is to push it to an inconvenient extreme. Nothing is added to the dignity of the Church, or gained by its music, in crowding the chancel of a small rural church with benches, and consigning the chief part in the singing to a body of untrained men and boys. In such cases it surely would be better to preserve such space as the little chancel affords to the clergy (and acolytes, if there be any) alone; and to entrust such music as the people can sing to the people themselves, led by a small choir sitting near them or among them.

In connection with the exceptions named above, whereby certain laymen were allowed seats within the chancel, it is interesting to note that the sovereign of England has of right a prebendal stall in the choir of S. David's Cathedral.

At the time of the Reformation this belonged, *ex officio*, to the Master of S. Mary's College in that city; and at the suppression of all such foundations the property of S. Mary's was seized by the Crown, and given away or sold. A prebendal stall, however, not being worth much as a marketable commodity, this remained in the hands of the King, and passed with his other dignities to his successors. It is scarcely needful to add, that the right to the stall did not, nor was ever suggested to, confer any sacerdotal privileges.

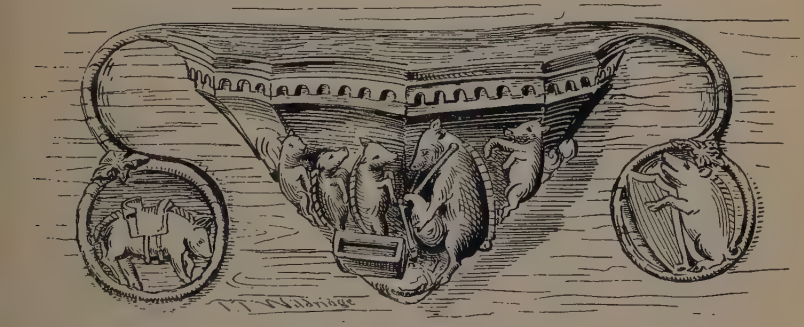
The earliest form of chancel terminated in an apse; the altar standing upon the chord of the arc, a throne for the bishop being behind it against the eastern wall, and seats for the clergy filling the curve on either side of the throne. We have traces of such an arrangement in the cathedrals of Canterbury and Norwich, but basilican churches, of which this form of chancel was one characteristic, were never general in this country. It would seem as if, in early times, not much more accommodation was made for the clergy in the chancel than for the laity in the nave; for the recognized name of the priests' places during the choir-offices is *stalls*, which strictly means standing places, and not seats. Standing and kneeling were in fact the only attitudes formally recognized during divine service; sitting was afterwards allowed as a concession, rather than a right. The dignity of the bishop has, however, always been marked by the provision of a throne for his use in cathedral churches. In Greece a T-shaped crutch is allowed to the aged monks to support them during the recitation of the offices; and the introduction of a similar practice in the monasteries of the west was the first departure from the

rigour of the original rule, which insisted upon all monks standing throughout their services, except when required to kneel.

The rule once relaxed, the way was open for the gradual development of the stalls, with arm-rests, book-rests, canopies, and hassocks, as we find them to-day. In the ninth and two following centuries, we read of forms for the use of the clergy; Maestricht had stalls in 1088; from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century we find ample notices of the adornment of these seats with carvings, hangings, painting, and canopies. At first, however, only the higher dignitaries and aged monks were allowed to occupy stalls; deacons, and junior monks, sat on benches below them; while choristers and vicars-choral stood or knelt upon the floor. For the due oversight of all the members of the choir, the four persons of highest dignity sat at the four corners; the dean in the westernmost stall on the south side, the precentor in the corresponding one on the north, while the chancellor and the treasurer were similarly placed at the eastern end; between these sat the other members of the chapter in order of seniority. Frequently the westernmost stalls, to the number of three or four on each side, were "returned," that is, turned round so as to face the altar.

In many of our old conventual churches we find a form of seat which was intended to provide a compromise between the standing posture, at first insisted upon for the recitation of the Psalter, and the sitting position, subsequently tolerated. This ingenious arrangement was known as a *misericorde*, and is sometimes less correctly called a *miserere*. It consisted of a narrow shelf beneath the seat;

FOOLS DANCING. BEVERLEY.



THE SOW AS MUSICIAN, BEVERLEY.

FOOL GRIMACING, BEVERLEY.

so that the latter, which was hinged, having been raised, the occupant of it could rest, half-sitting and half-standing, against the ledge beneath it. There is an early English example in the Lady Chapel at Westminster; and several in different places have attracted some attention from the curious carvings with which they have been adorned. It would almost look as if the monastic artist, having work assigned to him which would seldom meet the eye of his brethren, and scarcely ever that of the laity (for the misericorde is, as we have pointed out, on the under-side of the seat, and visible only when that is raised), sometimes gave full liberty—not to say license—to his fancy; and in this way gave us examples of monastic humour which are rather interesting than edifying, rather commendable in handicraft than in taste, as decorations of the church.

At Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, a church once served by the monks of Croyland Abbey, is a misericorde, the carving of which, if secular, is at least not flippant. It represents a shoemaker with a board upon his knees, on which lie various implements of his craft, among which the awl, the hammer, the file, and sundry knives can be readily distinguished; he is occupied in cutting out a leather rose for the decoration of a shoe. The church has five other misericordes, all of them dating probably from the reign of Edward IV. Among the satirical subjects carved on these misericordes, a favourite was the preaching fox. It appears at Ripon; Reynard being in the pulpit, with a goose and a cock, standing in an attitude of great attention, on either side. A similar scene, or another in which the fox suffers the last penalty of the law and hangs upon a gallows, is found at S. Mary's, Beverley, at Boston, Bristol, Nantwich,

and Sherborne. At Beverley are a number of quaintly carved misericordes; on one two cocks are sparring on a barrel, others have figures of a cock, and of an elephant driven by a monkey. In several cases we find what is alleged to be a mediæval form of the classic emblem for the day with its preceding and following nights, known as Darkness devouring Light. The usual antique figure consists of two eagles watching the altar of the sun, or pecking the fire therefrom; on a misericorde at Beverley it appears as two swans with a cylinder between them, from which they feed; at Ripon the altar has been replaced by a tree. At Wells is a carving which recalls one of our most familiar nursery rhymes, and a not uncommon publican's sign, the cat and fiddle; the same combination occurs elsewhere. Other strange groups are a sow playing the bagpipes for a number of dancing pigs, at Boston; several frolicking jesters, and some grimacing jesters' heads, at Beverley; and numerous equally curious and fanciful carvings. Scriptural subjects, however, are also represented; as the story of Samson and of Jonah at Ripon, and the return of the Israelite spies at Beverley. Besides the places already named, interesting examples of misericordes may be found at Exeter, dating from the thirteenth century; at Chichester, Ely, Gloucester, Hereford, Lincoln, Bristol, Manchester, Chester, Cartmel, Darlington, Wimborne, Penkridge, and in several other places.

The adornment of the chancel, except by such permanent decoration as the carving of wood in screen, stalls, and perhaps reredos, or of stone in arches, niches, and so forth, does not call for much remark. The altar is vested in colours varying according to the sacred seasons of the

Christian year; and sometimes hangings of rich colours used to be introduced to add warmth of look to the chancel on special occasions. Among the ornaments preserved at S. Paul's in the seventh year of King Edward VI. were "baudkins of divers sorts and colours, for garnishing the quire for the King's coming, and for the Bishop's seat."

A natural mode of expressing joy, still used without criticism in secular rejoicings, is by means of illuminations; and the Church has chosen a similar mode of manifesting her feelings; though here the Puritan finds matter for objection. The great Paschal Candle, lighted on Easter Eve and placed near the altar, as a symbol of the return of Him, who is the Light of the World, and as a token of Easter joy, was often a most magnificent structure. In 1557 three hundred pounds of wax were required for the making of one used at Westminster Abbey; at Durham, the candle-stand, besides holding "a great long square taper of wax called the Pascall," had sconces, in the form of flowers of metal, for six smaller tapers, and had a great deal of carved work and beaten metal to adorn it. Parish accounts often allude to the provision of this great taper, which is kept burning at vespers and mass from Easter Eve to the Gospel on Ascension Day; at Reading, for instance, 5s. 8d. was paid in 1559 for "makynge of the Paschall and Funte (font) Taper."

Candlemas, as its name implies, was another occasion for an ecclesiastical illumination. At the procession before the High Mass a multitude of tapers was carried; but the chancel also received its special adornment by the burning of many lights. There is a curious account of an attempt made by Cosin, subsequently the first bishop of Durham

after the Restoration, to revive this striking usage in the northern cathedral. It is contained in a sermon entitled "The Vanity and Downfall of superstitious Popish ceremonies, preached in the Cathedral Church of Durham, by one Peter Smart, a prebend there, July 27th, 1626." The tale which Prebendary Smart waxes so wrath over is to the effect that "on Candlemas Day last past, Mr. Cozens, in renewing the Popish Ceremony of burning candles to the honour of Our Lady, busied himself from two of the clock in the afternoon till four, in climbing up long ladders to stick up wax candles in the said Cathedral Church: the number of all the candles burnt that evening was two hundred and twenty, besides sixteen torches,—sixty of those burning tapers and torches standing upon, and near, the high altar (as he called it), where no man came nigh."

As to the number, and use, of the candles upon the altar, or altars, of the Church, the cross, or crucifix, which stands amid them, and the flowers which so frequently are mingled with them, nothing need here be said; except that there is ample evidence that the modern revived employment of them has connecting links with their usage in the remote past, in their appearance here and there upon our altars, even in the days of the greatest irreverence, ignorance, and neglect.

There was a custom for the choristers themselves, and even the priests, in some places to deck themselves with flowers on S. Barnabas' Day (June 11th). In the parish accounts for S. Mary-at-Hill, London, during the reign of Edward IV., there is the entry of a sum disbursed for "Rose garlondis and Woodrove garlondis on St. Barnebe's Daye;" and in 1486 the following occurs: "Item, for two

doss' di bocse garlands for prestes and clerkes on Saynt Barnabe daye, js. xd;" and yet again, in 1512, we read, "Rose-garlands and Lavender, St. Barnabas, js. vjd." Anciently the feast of S. Barnabas, falling so near Midsummer Day, was far more regarded in England than it is at present. At Lichfield Cathedral on Ascension Day the choristers "beat the bounds" of the moated close, the boys bearing long green boughs, which they carry with them from the church, and on returning deposit on the steps of the font.

One of the most extraordinary customs, as it seems to us, in connection with the choir is the practice, once in vogue, of playing at ball in church at Easter. Among other places it is recorded to have taken place at Chester Cathedral on Easter Monday. The origin of the usage is obscure, though it has been supposed to be not distantly related to the more general Easter custom of presenting coloured eggs to one's friends. However it arose, it was conducted in a fashion which implies that it had some religious significance, and was in fact considered at its commencement as a religious ceremony. The deacon received the ball, and immediately began to chant an antiphon, moving meanwhile in a stately step in time to the music; then with his left hand he tossed, or handed, the ball to another of the clergy; when it had reached the hands of the dean, he threw it in turn to each of the choristers, the antiphon, accompanied by the organ, meanwhile continuing. The statutes of the cathedrals regulated the size of the balls used in this strange rite. In many places there is a tradition still that the game of football is especially appropriate to Easter Monday; and in several towns until quite recent times that game was played

in the streets by a promiscuous concourse of people on that day. It is natural to imagine that there may be some common origin to this and to the practice just described.

Another form of "sport," once popular in Yorkshire, and especially in the city of York, is alleged by tradition to have taken its rise in the chancel of a church in the northern metropolis. The festival of S. Luke was known throughout the North as Whip-dog Day, from the absurd and brutal custom of encouraging every lad to go about on that day with a whip, and pursue and beat every unhappy dog that he might encounter. The story which is quoted in explanation of this, is to the effect that a priest, in singing mass on S. Luke's Day in a church in York, by some accident dropt the consecrated host, which was snapt up by a dog which had crept in unawares and lain down beneath the altar. The dog, according to this rather improbable tale, paid the penalty of its sacrilege with its life, and all other dogs had to suffer an annual castigation in memory of that fact for many years after.

The ceremonial of creating a Boy-Bishop at Childermas and on S. Nicholas' Day has very often been described. We have notices of this custom in all parts of the country, not only in cathedral and collegiate churches, but in many simple parish churches. The office of "barne bishop" can be traced back as far as 1319 at Salisbury, and to 1369 at York. Colet, Dean of S. Paul's, found much that was commendable in the usage, and in his statutes for S. Paul's School, issued in 1578, ordained that the scholars should hear the child-bishop preach in the cathedral annually. It was required at York, and probably elsewhere, that the lad chosen for this mock-dignity should be one who had served

well in the minster, who was sufficiently comely, and whose voice was clear and unbroken. The boy chosen was duly invested in all the proper vestments of a bishop, while a number of his companions were suitably robed to attend him as priests and deacons. The duration of his brief "episcopate" is variously given; according to some accounts it commenced on Childermas Eve and terminated at the second vespers of that festival, so that it lasted only for about twenty-four hours; elsewhere, however, it is said to have begun on S. Nicholas' Day (Dec. 6th), and to have ceased on Childermas Eve (Dec. 27th), so that it lasted in this case for some three weeks. Probably the usage was not uniform throughout the country. During the tenure of the office, the boy-bishop performed all the functions of the actual dignitary, holding a kind of visitation, singing vespers and other offices, appointing (so it is alleged, at least at Salisbury) to any prebend that fell vacant, and even (incredible as it seems) singing some imitation of the mass.*

On December 7th, 1229 (the morrow of S. Nicholas), a boy-bishop sang vespers in the presence of Edward I. at Heton, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Thomas de Rotherham, Archbishop of York, bequeathed a mitre of cloth-of-gold adorned with silver to the "Barnes Bishop" in 1481. A statute of the Collegiate Church of S. Mary Overy, forbade the boy-

* Warton says that he performed all the ceremonies, "the mass excepted." The *Computus* of Hyde Abbey for 1327, however, contains a disbursement for feasting the boy-bishop who had celebrated mass on S. Nicholas' Day; and Henry VIII.'s proclamation for the abolition of the whole farce distinctly alleges that it was part of the usage for boys to "singe masse and preache in the pulpitts." It seems, therefore, certain that so far was the mock ceremonial carried that the child actually sang some sort of "dry mass"; for that he was ever suffered to go further than that, it is perfectly impossible to believe.

bishop to go in procession beyond the limits of his own parish. The sermon of the boy-bishop preached at Gloucester Cathedral in 1558 is yet extant, and gives a painful picture of the irreverence of the choristers; we may feel sure that in this, and all other cases, the sermon was composed for the juvenile preacher by some one of the clergy of the church.

This mock election, with all the attendant ceremonial, was condemned by a council at Nice in 1274, and again at a synod at Carnot in 1526; in England it was suppressed by a proclamation issued by Henry VIII. in 1542. The passage in that document which concerns this matter runs as follows: "Whereas heretofore dyvers and many superstitious and chyldysh observances have been vsed, and yet to this day are observed and kept, in many and sundry parts of this realm, as upon saint Nicholas, saint Catherine, saint Clement, the holy Innocents, and such like, children be strangelie decked and apparayled to counterfeit priestes, bishoppes, and women, and so be ledde with songes and daunces from house to house, blessing the people and gatheryng of money; and boyes do singe masse and preach in the pulpitt, with soche other vnfittinge and inconvenient vsages, rather to the derysyon than any true glory of God, or honor of his sayntes: The Kynge's maiestie therefore myndinge nothinge so moche as to advance the true glorie of God without vaine superstition, wylleth and commandeth that from henceforth all svch superstitious obseruations be left and clerely extinguished throwout his realme and dominions, forasmvch as the same doth resemble rather the vnlawfull superstition of Gentilitie, than the pure and sincere religion of Christe."

Whether the loss of such privileges as these rendered the life of a chorister less attractive we cannot say, but it is evident, from a manuscript now in the British Museum, that in the reign of Elizabeth some difficulty was found in maintaining the supply of boys suitable for the purpose. This is a document authorizing the impressing of children to be trained as choristers. The full text is as follows:—

"By the Queene, Elizabeth R.

"Whereas we have authorysed our servaunte Thomas Gyles, Mr. of the children of the cathedrall churche of St. Paule, within our cittie of London, to take upp suche apte and meete children as are most fitt to be instructed and framed in the arte and science of musicke and singinge as maye be had and found out within anie place of this our realme of England or Wales, to be by his education and bringinge up made meete and liable to serve us in that behalf when our pleasure is to call for them.

"Wee therefore by the tenor of these presents will and require you that you permit and suffer from henceforthe our saide servaunte Thomas Gyles and his deputie or deputies, and every of them to take up in anye cathedrall or collegiate churche or churches, and in everye other place or places of this our realme of England and Wales suche childe or children as he or they or anye of them shall finde and like of, and the same childe or children by vertue hereof for the use and service aforesaide with them or any of them, to bring awaye withoute anye letts, contradictons, staye, or interruptions to the contrarie, charginge, and commandinge you and everie of you to be aydinge, helpinge, and assistinge to the above named Thomas Gyles and his deputie and deputies in and aboute the due execution of the premisses for the more speedie, effectuall, and better accomplishing thereof from tyme to tyme, as you and everie of you doe tendar our will and pleasure, and will answere for doinge the contrarie at yor perilles.

"Gouen under our signet at our Manor of Grenewich, the xxvith daye of Aprill, in the xxviith yere of our reign.

"To all and singular deanes, prouostes, maisters, and wardens of collegies, and all ecclesiastical psons and mynisters, and to all other our officers, mynisters, and subiects to whome in this case it shall apperteyne, and to everye of them, greetinge."

Coming to the part taken by the choir in the services of the Church, we enter upon a subject which is so wide that here it can only be touched upon. Historically it may be said to stretch in an unbroken line from the organized singers of the Tabernacle down to our own time; while the various forms which that organization has taken, for the better rendering both of the vocal and instrumental music of the sanctuary, provides numerous questions for examination. Nor has controversy been excluded even from a subject so essentially requiring harmony, and calculated to promote it, as this. At different times and in various places the lawfulness of the use of music at all has, strange to say, been called in question; the employment of instrumental music was long considered of more than questionable propriety by a large section of the extreme Reformers; and even among ourselves at the present day, the rival claims of the ancient and dignified plain-song and of the more varied music of the modern composers, are sometimes argued, not without a certain amount of heat.

The antiphonal form of chanting, that is by the division of the choir into two sections, which sing alternately in answer one to the other, is unquestionably extremely ancient; and was probably derived by the Christian Church from the earlier Jewish tradition. In large choirs, as in cathedral and collegiate churches, it was (and indeed still is) usual to divide the choristers into two bodies, sitting respectively on the side of the dean, and of the precentor, and hence called *Decani* and *Cantoris*. A yet more ancient use, however, is said to have been for the whole body of singers to be placed on one side of the chancel, the officiant occupying the other; and thus versicle and

response, antiphon and psalm, were sung alternately by them. Usually once a week the side of the choir was changed, that the higher clergy, who maintained their places, might officiate in due order.

We cannot be too thankful that at the Reformation the musical portions of our services were not interfered with more than they were. For among the foreign Reformers, some of whose opinions had sadly too much weight in England, they were regarded with great suspicion; and indeed music generally was treated with singular contempt. Bullinger and Gualter write from Zurich in 1566 to two English bishops, Grindal and Horn, and express their regret that "measured chanting in churches is to be retained, . . . together with the sound of organs;" and the bishops, replying in the following year, say that they will not "assert that [these things] are to be retained, but we disapprove of it, as we ought to do." A letter to Bullinger in 1566 reports that "the use of organs is becoming more general in the churches;" and another to the same in 1567 informs him that "the Archbishop of Canterbury (Cranmer) has caused an organ to be erected in his metropolitan church at his own expense." This can scarcely have been approved by Thomas Becon, Cranmer's chaplain, who, in his "Jewel of Joy," declares music to be "a more vain and trifling science than it becometh a man, born and appointed to matters of gravity, to spend much time about;" and again, "that music is not so excellent a thing, that a Christian ought earnestly to rejoice in it."

In their efforts to discountenance music, and especially instrumental music, as an adjunct to the solemnity of public worship, the extreme men were put to the expedient of

explaining away such precedents as they could not deny Scripture afforded. William Thorpe, in his examination before Archbishop Arundel, maintained "that music and minstrelsy, that David and other saints of the old law spake of, ought now neither to be taken nor used by the letter; but these instruments, with their music, ought to be interpreted ghostly." With such fanatics there was, of course, no arguing.

In Scotland, as is well known, these sentiments for a long time held sway, and organs are even now barely more than tolerated in some of the Presbyterian kirks; even the singing of "Caralles" was prohibited by Act of Parliament in the northern kingdom; although New Year's Eve is still called Carol Ewyn in Perthshire, from the custom of singing from door to door on that night.

In England carols of old were extremely popular, and were sung in church at Christmas time, a custom that has happily been largely revived of late. These were the vernacular sacred songs, or hymns, of the people, and were sung, not by the choir only, but by the whole congregation. Formerly on Christmas Day, especially at evensong, sung, as was universal till recently, in the afternoon, appropriate carols often took the place of the psalms appointed for the day. Nowhere, however, have carols had, and maintained, a greater popularity than in the Isle of Man. There, under the name of *carvals*, they have long been sung by the people in church on *Oie'l Verrey*, or Christmas Eve. A crowded congregation assembled on this occasion, every one bringing a candle for his own use, the multitude of twinkling lights making a striking picture. Evensong having been said, and a hymn sung, every one in turn, who knew a

"carval," was at liberty to sing it; and as these Manx carols are some of them of great length, and there were many vocalists forthcoming, the service frequently lasted until a very late hour. The parish priest in the old times usually left long before the conclusion, leaving the clerk in charge of the people; and then there was only too often a good deal of horseplay and misbehaviour before the congregation finally broke up. This service is still continued, but is now kept within more reasonable limits; and, under the personal supervision of the clergy and led by the choir, has been deprived of such elements in it as were open to objection. In Wales choral services have also been from of old extremely popular at Christmas, the usual time in the Principality being early on the morning of the festival. It is probable that in both cases these services are a recollection of the midnight mass of the Nativity, once universally offered throughout the country.

The use of metrical hymns is very ancient in the Church, some of the Latin compositions of the kind having as their authors such early and honoured fathers as S. Hilary of Poictiers, S. Gregory Nazianzen, Paulinus of Nola, Prudentius, and S. Ambrose. The only ancient metrical hymn formally authorized by the English Church since the Reformation is the "Veni, Creator Spiritus," which forms part of the Ordinal. This fine hymn is first found in the works of Rabanus Maurus, who flourished about 847, and has been variously assigned to S. Ambrose and Charlemagne. We have, of course, no authorised Hymnary in the English Church. The first attempt to provide something of the kind was made by Thomas Sternhold, groom of the robes to Henry VIII. and Edward VI., who turned into English

metre fifty-one of the Psalms; a contemporary writer, John Hopkins, versified another eighty-five, and the remaining fourteen were similarly treated by other hands. This version, commonly known as "Sternhold and Hopkins," came into general favour for use in church, and continued so for about a century. In 1696, however, appeared a rival version; this was the joint work of Nahum Tate, who had been appointed poet-laureate in 1690, and of Dr. Nicholas Brady. This book received a sort of quasi-authority, and was commonly bound up with the Book of Common Prayer. It speedily displaced Sternhold and Hopkins, and was used in many churches until comparatively recent years; nay, it is even said yet to hold its place in one or two out-of-the-world corners. Within the present century a multitude of hymn-books have been compiled for the use of the Church, in which translations of many of the mediæval hymns, as well as compositions of modern writers, are included; and these have ousted the metrical psalms. In this way a great gain has been made in the way of useful, yet popular, devotional literature; and we avoid the monotony of singing repeatedly in metre what has been already said or chanted in the metrical prose of the Prayer-book Psalter. Even in the past the need was occasionally felt for some hymns more suitable for particular occasions than a metrical psalter could supply; and wonderful are the stories of the versified abominations inflicted upon congregations by "poetical" parish clerks. The arrangement and choice of the music was in those days left almost, or quite, entirely in the hands of that functionary, who from his place in the "three-decker," announced the hymns according to the following quaint, but not inappropriate, formula, "Let us sing to the praise and glory of God

psalm 'so-and-so.'" An example of the home-made verse perpetrated by some of these worthy men will perhaps be interesting; there are several that might be quoted, but they usually lack the verifying details of date and place. The following, however, was sung in Osmotherly Church, Yorkshire, during a cattle-plague in 1747. There are eight stanzas, the first four of which describe the deceased cattle, and express sympathy with their owners, whose names are given; then follow these sublime lines :—

"No Christian's bull nor cow, they say
But takes it out of hand;
And we shall have no cows at all,
I doubt, within this land.

"The doctors, though they all have spoke
Like learned gentlemen,
And told us how the entrails look
Of cattle dead and green;

"Yet they do nothing do at all,
With all their learning's store;
So Heaven drive out this plague away
And vex us not no more."

Strictly speaking the consideration of the psalmody of the period here alluded to, does not belong to a chapter on the chancel; as at that time the choristers, assisted by a little orchestra of amateur musicians, usually occupied a western gallery. With the inauguration of organs almost everywhere, the old parish orchestra has died out; a fact which one cannot regard without some regret. Some effort might surely have been made to blend the new and the old, to preserve the fiddles and bassoons as allies of the organ. The company of minstrels to accompany the music of the divine offices is, in fact, an ancient institution, worthy of preservation from its long tradition, as well as for its own

sake. A gallery for its accommodation was often erected; at York and at Chichester there was such a loft above the reredos, at other places the minstrels were sometimes placed in the rood-loft; the north side of the nave was elsewhere found the most convenient situation, and a gallery, built there for this purpose, exists at Wells and at Exeter, and in several foreign cathedrals. At S. Mary's, Beverley, is a pillar in the nave, usually called "the Minstrels' Pillar," from the fact that the capital is carved with the figures of five musicians playing respectively on the harp, lute, treble and bass flute, and tabor; while in Latin the inscription runs beneath, "Pray for the souls of the players." As a sample of the constitution of the parish orchestra of modern times, it may be mentioned that at Crowle, Lincolnshire, at the date of its supercession by an organ in 1847, the band consisted of two fiddles, a double bass, a flute, a clarionette, and a bassoon.

The organ has also a venerable antiquity, and is mentioned as existing in England as early as the year 700; and many of our large churches had more than one, in different parts of the church. The custom, till lately common, of placing the organ on the rood-screen began only at the Restoration, when the wholesale destruction of the Puritan era necessitated the rebuilding of instruments in most of the cathedrals. It is now giving way to a method of arrangement, far preferable both from its appearance and its musical effect, by which the organ is divided, and placed above the stalls, on either side of the chancel. The development and use of this king of musical instruments, to be fairly treated, would require at least some chapters; we must therefore pass on.

Against the east wall of the church in most cases stands

the altar; although in cathedrals a chapel, usually the Lady Chapel, lies eastward of the high altar. In bygone days, however, the altar did not usually stand absolutely against the wall as is now usual, but at the distance of a few feet from it. This is illustrated by a charm for fits, in vogue in Devonshire and Cornwall; the sufferer was directed to enter the church at midnight, and walk thrice around the altar. In the majority of churches this would now be impossible.

Another form of the charm, a variant introduced perhaps since the performance of the above perambulation has become difficult, is to walk thrice around the church at the same ghostly hour, and then to enter and stand before the altar. This is said to have been tried at least once in Crowan Church, Cornwall, with disastrous results. A young man, having performed the first part of the charm, was feeling his way up the church in the darkness, when he placed his hand upon a human head! With a piercing shriek he fainted, and only recovered to be taken, a hopeless lunatic, to the asylum, where he died. The head was, as a matter of fact, that of the sexton, who in all kind-heartedness had come in to protect the midnight walker from being alarmed by any practical jokes.

The sanctity of the altar is invoked as a cure in other ways. A piece of a candle that has burned on the altar of the parish church of S. Blazey (dedicated to S. Blaize), Cornwall, if applied to a tooth or to the throat, is locally supposed to be an effectual cure for any pain in those members; and diseases in cattle yield to the same remedy. "Sacrament wine," that is wine of the same kind, or drawn from the same stock, as that offered in the Holy Eucharist, has also had

specially curative properties ascribed to it; but whether this arises from any fancied virtue which it derives from its very remote connection with the Blessed Sacrament, or whether it is only that country clergy have sometimes used a similar wine for the altar and for giving to the sick poor, it is not very easy to determine; perhaps both these ideas are combined in the belief.

At S. John's College, Hurstpierpoint, there is an alleged omen of death in the house, which is interesting from the fact that the belief in it must be of very recent growth, the college having been founded only in 1851. A robin is said to fly into the college chapel, and to alight upon the altar and sing there, previously to anyone in the institution dying. For such an idea to have arisen within the last half-century, it would seem that so singular a circumstance must at any rate have happened two or three times within that period; a fact which in itself is curious.

At S. Ives, Huntingdon, there is a custom still in use, which originally involved a strange and irreverent employment of the altar. A certain Dr. Robert Wilde, dying in 1678, bequeathed to the parish the sum of £50, which was to be invested, and the income expended as follows; once a year a sermon on the value and use of Holy Scripture was to be preached by the vicar, who was to receive 10s. for doing so; after this, six boys and six girls, chosen from the parishioners, were to go up to the altar, and thereon cast three dice each, the six who succeeded in throwing the highest number being awarded Bibles, the cost of each copy not to exceed 7s. 6d. The requirements of the doctor's will are still observed, save that a small table, placed at the chancel step, is now used for the dice-throwing; and the

desecration of the altar is avoided. The money was invested in a parcel of land, now known as "Bible Orchard."

The practice of making a reverence towards the altar on entering and leaving church,—a usage stigmatised as superstitious, popish, idolatrous by certain critics of the Church—is not only ancient, but has been observed continuously in very many parts of England: its now not uncommon use cannot strictly be called a revival, since it has never ceased.

Amongst the older regulations on the subject, we may note one of the statutes of Lincoln Minster, dating from 1440, whereby the vicars, who had been in the habit of running heedlessly and irreverently about the choir, were bidden to bow to the altar at every entrance and egress. Laud, in his revised statutes of Canterbury, required a similar act of reverence; and it seems to have been observed as an unbroken tradition at S. George's Chapel, Windsor, Christ Church, Oxford, and in Durham Cathedral. In 1635, Mainwaring, Dean of Worcester, reproved the king's scholars there for coming into the cathedral tumultuously; and ordered that they should enter two and two in an orderly manner, and make their due obeisance. A canon of the synod of 1640 was concerned with this practice, of which it speaks as follows:—"We heartily commend it to all good and well-affected people, that they be ready to tender to the Lord their reverence and obeisance, both at their coming in and going out of church, according to the most ancient custom of the primitive Church in the purest times."

It is in country parishes and in quiet old-world spots that we must look, however, for the most part for instances of the continuance of this usage. The Manxmen observed it

regularly until quite recent times, and Bishop Wilson tells us that, on his going to the island, he was requested by Archdeacon Hewestone to be careful "to make obeisance at coming into and going out of church, and at going up and coming down from the altar; all ancient, commendable and devout usages which thousands of good people of our Church practice at this day." Similarly in English villages the practice has in many cases only decayed amid the general carelessness of the present century. Not more than sixty years ago, so it is said, the custom was universal among the Lincolnshire rustics of Kirton-in-Lindsey for the men to pull their forelocks and for the women to curtsy on entering and on leaving church; and the same is related of many parishes.

Among the modern additions to the furniture of the chancel must be counted the altar-rails. Originally, as we have seen in a passage quoted early in this chapter, the laity communicated outside the choir; the altar therefore needed no protection beyond the chancel-screen. When, however, the Reformers pulled down these screens, and the Puritans began to drag the altars into the midst of the chancel, or of the church, placing them table-wise, it became necessary to provide some new form of protection. In the time of Bishop Andrewes, therefore, the use of altar-rails began, that saintly prelate referring to them under the name of "wainscot banisters." They did not, however, become general until the days of Laud, who insisted upon the altars being replaced altar-wise, and being fenced about to prevent their being irreverently used. As the employment of this railing was a visible assertion of the sanctity of the altar and of its mysteries, the Puritans detested it; and the

journal of William Dowsing, the Parliamentary visitor of churches during the Great Rebellion, shows that he had it pulled down wherever met with. In some churches, at the time of the offering of the Holy Eucharist, this rail is covered with a linen cloth, a relic, or revival, of the "houselling-cloth," which communicants held beneath the chin to catch any fragment of the Blessed Sacrament which might fall. Among churches where this ancient custom still prevails are S. German's, Wimborne, Leamington Priory, and Hensall, in Yorkshire.

CHAPTER XI.

Alms and Offerings.

FROM apostolic times it has been customary for the Church to act, to a great extent, as the almoner of her people; collecting their contributions and distributing them, usually in three ways—for the poor, the fabric of the churches, and the support of the clergy. Opportunity was also given from very early days for the faithful to exercise their charity in giving alms in connection with the public services of the Church. To some such custom S. Paul alludes, when he writes to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xvi., 2), "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." S. Chrysostom also refers to a practice, whereby the deserving poor were encouraged to stand at the church-door to receive alms from those who entered. "Therefore the poor stand before the doors of the church," says he, "that no one should go in empty, but enter securely with charity for his companion: you go into church to obtain mercy, first show mercy; make God your debtor, and then you may ask of Him, and receive with usury: we are not heard barely for the lifting up of our hands; stretch forth your hands not only to heaven, but also to the hands of the poor."

The offerings of the people in those primitive times were very various; as they often are now in missionary stations in

barbarous lands. But not all gifts might be brought to the altar for solemn presentation. Bread and wine for use in the Eucharist were so offered; the first-fruits of corn and grapes, as representative of all other first-fruits, and oil and incense for the services of the Church, these also might be laid upon the altar, but not at the time of the Eucharist. Money does not appear to have been recognized for some time among the offerings which were to be formally received and presented.

The old name of the feast of S. Peter's Chains, on August 1st—Lammas Day—recalls some of the gifts in kind anciently made in the English Church. This word has been variously interpreted as meaning Lamb-mass and Loaf-mass. In connection with the former the Welsh name is quoted, which is *Dydd degwm wyn*, or lamb-tithing day; and there is also instanced an old usage at York. It is alleged that the tenants of the Chapter of York, whose minster is dedicated in the name of S. Peter ad Vincula, had on this festival to bring a live lamb into the church during the celebration of High Mass, and to present it at the altar. There is, however, far stronger evidence on behalf of the other derivation. King Alfred in his translation of Orosius renders the Kalends of August by "*Hlaf-Maesse*"; and, as if to supply the connecting link between that form of the word and the more modern one, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, under the date of 921, speaks of this festival as "*hlam-maesse*." It is obvious, therefore, that Loaf-mass is the original word; and this has been further explained by the use of *Festum primitiarum*, or feast of first-fruits, as an equivalent Latin term: and it is said that a loaf, made from the newly-harvested wheat, was on this day presented at the

altar as an act of thanksgiving. It was a day far more considered of old than in recent times; and ancient chroniclers frequently date events as happening at Lammas-tide. Robert of Gloucester says, of King Edmund, that "ye lammasse afterward he spousede ye quene"; the Saxon Chronicle reports that William Rufus was slain on the morrow after Lammas Day; and one of the ballads of Chevy Chase, fought on the eve of that festival in 1388, begins—

> "It fell out about the Lammas tide
> When yeomen win the hay,
> The doughty Douglas gan to ride
> In England to take a prey."

The offering of the lamb at York leads us on to other animal oblations. In Carnarvonshire there was, in Pennant's days, a curious usage, which was not wholly extinct half a century since. On Trinity Sunday the people of the neighbourhood brought to the church of Clynnok Vaur, as they had formerly done to the monastery there, all such calves and lambs as had been born that spring with a certain birth-mark on the ear, known as *Nod Beuno*, or S. Beuno's mark. These the churchwardens received and sold; the money being applied to the relief of the poor, or the repair of the fabric of the church. Until expended the proceeds of the sale were kept in *Gyff S. Beuno*, or S. Beuno's Chest, a massive coffer hewn from a log of oak, and secured with three locks; whence any difficult matter is locally compared to "breaking open S. Beuno's Chest."

On S. Agnes' Day two lambs are solemnly blessed at the church of that saint at Rome, being carried on cushions to the altar; and from the fleeces of these are subsequently

woven the woollen *pallia* given to the archbishops of the Roman obedience.

There were other similar cases in mediæval England; the offering of the animal being not seldom, as at York, a form of land tenure. A white bull was annually presented at the abbey in Bury S. Edmund's; and the fishermen of the Thames offered a salmon at the altar of Westminster Abbey. At S. Paul's from the reign of Edward I. to that of Elizabeth a doe was presented to the dean and chapter, and solemnly received by them at the choir steps, on the feast of the Conversion of S. Paul; and similarly a fat buck was brought thither in the summer. This was done in accordance with a bequest of one of the family of Le Baud, some of whose descendants and their retainers were commonly present at the ceremony. The manor of Raby was held of the Chapter of Durham by the Nevilles for the service of a stag presented at the cathedral on S. Cuthbert's Day.

After the battle of Neville's Cross the victors offered the spoils of the Scots, the banners, jewels, and, above all, the famous Black Rood of Scotland, at the high altar of Durham Cathedral. The tattered banners of our regiments are still often delivered to the custody of the Church by which they were originally blessed; and on their reception they are placed first upon the altar, and then hung somewhere within the walls, of a church connected in some way with the regiment.

A rather frightful, certainly unchristian, oblation was the Welsh *Offrwm Gelyn*, the offering of one's enemies. In this weird rite a man, imagining himself injured or aggrieved, went to a church dedicated in the name of some famous and powerful saint; and there, kneeling upon his bare

knees, and first propitiating the saint with an offering of money, he called down every conceivable malediction upon the head of his supposed enemy, his family, possessions, and descendants. The classic Greeks had a custom almost precisely similar.

In treating of curious offerings, the royal oblations and gifts at Epiphany and on Maundy Thursday must not be forgotten.

In commemoration of the gifts of the Magi to the Infant Saviour it has long been the practice for the English sovereign personally or by deputy to make an offering at the altar of the Chapel Royal, S. James's, of gold, incense, and myrrh. The three gifts are enclosed in bags or purses of white kid placed within a crimson velvet box. In 1731 the *Gentleman's Magazine* records that "the king and the prince (George II. and Frederic, Prince of Wales) made the offerings at the altar of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, according to custom." This usage is said to have lasted for nearly eight hundred years, and the sovereign himself made the offering in person down to the middle of the last century. On these occasions the king advanced to the altar in great state, preceded by heralds and pursuivants, and by the sword of state, and accompanied by the Knights of the Garter, the Thistle, and the Bath, all arrayed in the collars of their respective orders. In the year 1758, however, the eve of the Epiphany found the royal family of England in great sorrow, as on that day took place the funeral of the Princess Caroline; George III. therefore deputed the Lord High Chamberlain (at that time the Duke of Devonshire) to make the offerings in his stead on the morrow. Since then the sovereign has not again appeared in person at the

ceremony; and now two Gentleman Ushers of the Household act as the royal deputies. The offerings themselves also declined within recent times, and became merely paltry amounts of myrrh and incense, and a trumpery roll of gold-leaf. In 1860, at the suggestion of the late Prince Consort, twenty-five sovereigns were substituted for the last gift; and these are afterwards distributed to the deserving poor of the neighbouring parishes. The function is therefore now not only an interesting survival, but one that is practically useful. A similar practice obtains at the court of Spain.

The Maundy gifts form the only surviving part of a much fuller ceremonial, in which the sovereign, in imitation of the humility of Christ, washed the feet of a number of poor folk, and then presented them with alms, and provided for them a meal. James II. was the last English king who personally performed this office, though for fully half a century later it was executed for the sovereign by a deputy. In 1731 the Archbishop of York, as Lord High Almoner, performed the duty. As, however, in any case the feet-washing and the dinner took place in one of the royal halls, and not, of course, within the Chapel Royal, they lie outside our limits. The donation of money is still continued, and forms part of a religious ceremony. The Chapel Royal, Whitehall, is used for the service, which, in its devotional aspect, consists mainly of prayers for the welfare of the sovereign, and of anthems, usually dwelling upon the blessedness of charity. At intervals in the service the several gifts are distributed, consisting of shoes and stockings, woollen and linen cloth, and money. This last is given to each recipient in two purses of red and white respectively. The red purse contains a sovereign, and since 1838 has also held a second

sovereign and a half-sovereign in lieu of the banquet formerly provided, to which was added a certain amount of food, which each was allowed to carry away. The white purse contains the Maundy money proper, consisting of as many pence as there are years in the sovereign's life, the sum being made up of silver pieces valuing 4d., 3d., 2d., and 1d. These coins are struck at the Mint specially for this purpose, but the 3d. piece of ordinary currency is practically the same as the Maundy coin of that value. The others, being necessarily somewhat rarely met with, are frequently exchanged afterwards by their recipients for ordinary coins at a considerable advance in value.

Maundy gifts of the several kinds above mentioned, and graduated according to the age of the donor, were not of old limited exclusively to royalty; for the Household Book of the Duke of Northumberland, in the early part of the sixteenth century, contains a list of similar gifts presented by him to poor folk on Maundy Thursday; and the practice is spoken of as if of long standing.

The only place in the Book of Common Prayer at which it is ordered that alms should be collected from the congregation in general, is in the office for the Holy Eucharist; though in the course of the "Visitation of the Sick," we read, "The Minister shall not omit earnestly to move such sick persons as are of ability to be liberal to the poor;" and again, "the woman that cometh to give her thanks," that is, to be Churched, "must offer accustomed offerings." The rubrics in the Communion service are two, as follows: "Then shall the Priest return to the Lord's Table and begin the offertory, saying one or more of these sentences following, as he thinketh most convenient in his

discretion;" "Whilst these sentences are in reading, the Deacons, Churchwardens, or other fit person appointed for that purpose, shall receive the alms for the poor, and other devotions of the people, in a decent bason to be provided by the parish for that purpose; and reverently bring it to the priest, who shall humbly present and place it upon the Holy Table."

The use of the word "Offertory" in the former of these rubrics has been misunderstood, and has of recent years led to its misuse. It has in some way got to be considered the "correct" name for the alms, which it is not, nor ever was. In its widest sense the *Offertorium*, or offertory, is all that portion of the Eucharistic office which centres round the act of solemnly offering the elements previous to their consecration; it begins with the "sentences," in the English rite, and ends with the Preface before the *Sanctus*. Two other derived meanings of the same word are, first, an anthem anciently sung during the collection of the alms and oblations of the faithful; and, second, a silken napkin, akin to the more modern humeral veil, in which the deacon enveloped the chalice when offered to him by the priest. There is no authority for using the word as equivalent to the thing, or things, offered by the congregation.

The custom of committing the collection of the alms to the deacons is very ancient, but has necessarily dropt out of use with us, from the fact that there is so seldom one, and extremely rarely more than one, present at a service in an ordinary parish church. In the days when the diaconate was in many cases a permanent office, and when large churches, as in the primitive Church, had seven or more attached to them, it was, of course, very different.

The basin, or dish, in which the alms are collected for presentation on the altar is often very handsome. At S. Margaret's, Westminster, are examples in latten of Flemish manufacture; and an ancient one in the Norfolk and Norwich Museum has a representation of the Annunciation in the centre; that also now used at S. Paul's is very large, and is similarly enriched with a copy of Raffaelle's cartoon of S. Paul preaching at Athens. A good many now in use bear the names of their donors, and the date of the gift; but very few really old ones have survived to modern times. Wooden boxes, instead of basins, were at one time in common use, and some of those still in existence are supposed to date from the sixteenth century. Among these ancient specimens are boxes at Beckenham and at Blythborough. At Blickling, Norfolk, is a quaint box, shaped like a heart, and bearing the inscription "Pray Remember the Pore. 92." The date probably stands for 1592. The popular modern method of collection is by bags; these being subsequently placed in the large alms-dish for actual presentation. The Ritual Commission of 1870 proposed implicitly to recognise this usage by altering the rubric, so that the latter part should read, "—and reverently bring them to the Priest, who shall humbly present and place them upon the Holy Table in a decent bason to be provided for that purpose."

In some districts special virtue is ascribed to the coins that have thus been offered to God upon His altar. A "sacrament shilling" is in many places considered an effective talisman for the cure of epilepsy. In Wales the method of procedure is simple; a hint having been given as to the requirement, usually through some third person, a

shilling from the alms offered at the Eucharist must be given, without direct solicitation, to the person afflicted, who must receive it without thanks. From this coin a silver ring is made, and worn day and night. As recently as 1882 this charm was used at Efenechtyd, and also within the last few years at Rhosymedre. In Shropshire a rather more elaborate ceremonial has to be observed. Twelve pennies must be collected from twelve unmarried men if the patient be a woman, from the like number of maidens if it be a man; and these are exchanged for the "sacrament shilling." The ring made from this coin may then be worn on the finger, or suspended about the neck; some authorities say further that benefit will accrue if it be rubbed upon the eye. According to the custom of another locality in the same county, the sum needful is three shillings, which must be obtained in the above manner from three several churches, the donors meanwhile knowing nothing of the purpose to which the money is to be put. In Cornwall the same superstition obtains, but in that county thirty pennies must be subscribed by that number of persons of the opposite sex to that of the epileptic sufferer, who stands at the church door to receive them. In Herefordshire and Wiltshire the smaller coin, the shilling, is the one prescribed; and in the latter county application for one was made in 1874. In the *Times* of March 7th, 1854, is an account of the use of a similar charm in Devonshire; and although the exchange for "Sacrament money" seems to have been omitted on that occasion, we may fairly suppose that the scene described was a survival of the usage of which we are writing. "A young woman, living in the neighbourhood of Halsworthy, North Devon," so runs the

Times paragraph, "having for some time past been subject to periodical fits of illness, endeavoured to effect a cure by attendance at the afternoon service at the parish church, accompanied by thirty young men, her near neighbours. Service over, she sat in the porch of the church, and each of the young men as they passed out in succession, dropped a penny into her lap; but the last, instead of a penny, gave her half-a-crown, taking from her the twenty-nine pennies. With this half-crown in hand she walked three times round the communion-table, and afterwards had it made into a ring, by the wearing of which she believed she would recover her health." According to some authorities the ring for this curative purpose should be made by simply cutting the centre from the coin, and wearing the flat circle which is left. This superstition has been met with in comparatively recent times, besides in the districts already noticed, in the Forest of Dean, in North Yorkshire, and in Durham.

In past times alms were collected, or at any rate church funds were used, for purposes which would now seem very strange. Among the most remarkable instances are some entries in the churchwardens' account for some Staffordshire parishes. At Wolverhampton, in the year 1555, we find an entry, among the items of expenditure, of "Charities to a gibbet beyond Bilston;" and at S. Leonard's, Bilston, are two as follows:—

"1692. For setting up ye Gibbett, 2s. 6d."
"1701. For repairing ye Gibbett, 1s. 10d."

A patent was issued by Charles I., dated 22nd September, 1641, authorizing collections in various specified places

for the repairing of Grimsby harbour. This document sets forth that the king has been informed that "the Towne of Great Grimsby is a haven Towne having a very commodious roade stead for the anchorage and relieving of Shipps uppon Stormes and contrary winds;" but that "now our said Towne is fallen into great decay and poverty for want of trading and principally occasioned by the silting and warping upp of the Haven there, soe now a shipp of small burthen without great difficulty cannot come to the Towne bridge where a shipp of three or four hundred tons might formerly have floated." In consequence of this, authority is given to "the Maior and Burgesses of our borough of Great Grimsby aforesaid and their deputy and deputies the bearer or bearers hereof, . . . to aske, gather, receive, and take the almes and charitable benevolence of all our loving subjects whatsoever inhabiting within our Cities of London and Westminster, the suburbs and libties of them both, and in our Counties of Lincolne, Yorke, Norfolke, Suffolke, Essex, Kent, Sussex, Surrey, and Middlesex: our Cities of Lincolne, Yorke, Norwich, Canterbury, Rochester, with the Cinque ports: our Citty of Chichester, and borough of Southwarke, the counties, lib'ties, and p'cincts of and within the same Cities, and in all Cities, townes corporate, privileged places, parishes, villages, and in all other places whatsoever within our said counties, and not elsewhere, for and towards the repair of their said haven, and to noe other use, interest, or purpose whatsoever." Owing probably to the dislocation of all things consequent upon the outbreak of the Civil War, no action seems to have been taken on the authority of this patent until after the Restoration; in 1663, however, entries occur in several churchwardens' accounts

showing that contributions were made towards the object here defined.

Allusion has been made in a former chapter to the briefs or patents, such as the foregoing, which have since the Reformation been issued by the Crown, authorizing collections for various objects, just as before that time they were issued by the pope. The number of these was considerable, as is shown by notices of alms collected under their authority inserted in parochial records. To cite one instance; in the little parish of Hagworthingham, in Lincolnshire, between June, 1661, and July, 1667, or in the course of six years, no less than sixty-three briefs were received and responded to. They came, therefore, almost once a month. The majority were for the repair of churches—for which, no doubt, there were unusually urgent and frequent calls at that time, immediately after the Puritan regimé of the Commonwealth—and for the relief of sufferers from fire. Some, however, are for other purposes. The brief on behalf of Grimsby Haven produced at Hagworthingham the sum of 2s.; towards the repair of Thrapston Bridge, Northamptonshire, 3s. 2d. was contributed; several sums were raised "for relief of poor visited people" in the plague year, 1665; and in some cases the name of the person or place assisted is entered alone, without further explanation. The experience of this parish may be taken as a sample of the rest, to which came appeals for help from far and near; as they came to Hagworthingham not from its own county only, or from neighbouring ones, but from places as distant as Tynemouth, in Northumberland, and Milton Abbas in Dorset, from Pool in Montgomeryshire, and Cromer in Norfolk.

The need for appealing to the charity of our congregations for these causes has in many cases passed away, the State having assumed the responsibility of preserving its bridges, harbours, gallows, and other such things. Happily, too, the necessity of collecting alms for such a cause as the following has ceased; although the distresses of foreigners, as well as of fellow-citizens, are still frequently remembered. Under the date March, 1670, there is an entry in the accounts of Holy Cross, Westgate, Canterbury, recording a contribution of £2 7s. 4d. for "Redeeming the captives in Turkye."

Doles, although they had their origin in the custom of distributing food to the poor at the time of a funeral, scarcely come within our scope, since they are as a rule distributed elsewhere than in the church. A certain number of them, however, were founded, usually by the last will of their donors, with the pious intention of promoting regular attendance at divine service; and these are generally distributed at the conclusion of the chief service on Sunday morning. While admitting the good intentions of the donors of such charities, one cannot help questioning the soundness of their judgment, in thus offering the inducement of mercenary motives for the performance of a religious duty. Several London churches have ancient doles of this nature, a number of loaves of bread, or a certain sum of money, being distributed weekly among a given number of the aged poor who are present at church. It is a rare thing to find a new endowment of this kind; one such is, however, recorded on a tablet in the parish church of S. Michael, Derby. We learn there that the late James Francis King left by will within very recent years the sum of £1,000 to the parish, the interest of which is partly to be

expended in the purchase of twenty loaves of good bread, at sixpence each, to be given after the service each Sunday morning to as many poor parishioners; the remainder of the income is to be devoted to keeping the church in good order and repair. It was ordained also by the will that the dole thus founded should bear the quaint name of "King's Sympathy."

The parish of Paddington received a bequest long since from two maiden ladies, the proceeds of which were to be spent in bread, cheese, and beer, for the refreshment of the parishioners on the Sunday before Christmas Day. The bread used to be thrown from the steeple, and scrambled for in the churchyard; and it is said that some portion of it was even so treated within the present century. Neither the manners of the people, nor their bread, were likely to be improved by the practice.

The *mortuary*, or legacy to the Church at the funeral of some person of note, can scarcely, perhaps, be called an instance of alms, since it was insisted upon as a right; yet in its origin it was accounted such, since it was supposed to be in place of any tithes, or other obligations, which had been omitted during the life-time of the deceased. Several synods issued canons concerning these mortuaries, of which the following, forming one of the statutes of the see of Sodor, in 1239, is among the most explicit:—"In mortuaries let the best animal be given to the Church, whether it be a cow, an ox, or a horse, if it be the value of six shillings or less; also as far as relates to clothes, it shall be at the option of the Church whether to receive the clothes or three shillings and sixpence: and if he be a poor man, and pay no mortuary, let the clothes be taken as they are, and also

every fifth penny of his personal property, after the payment of his debts: when a man pays a mortuary, let the priest have his shoes and boots to the value of sixpence, and his hood, hat, or cap, which he used on Christmas Day: also let him have his shirt, girdle, purse, and knife, each to the value of one penny." The Constitutions of Giles de Bridport, Bishop of Salisbury, dated 1256, do not make quite such large demands. "The parson or vicar, upon the death of any landowner, shall receive the next best of his cattle after that given to the feudal lord; and if there should not be several cattle, the executors are bound to satisfy the parson from the goods of the deceased, before they administer his will." Among the grievances of which the House of Commons complained in 1530 were "the extreme exaction which the spiritual men used in taking corpse-presents or mortuaries."

The making of these offerings, which was often done openly in the church at the funeral, led to some strange and striking scenes. The body of Hatfield, Bishop of Durham from 1345 to 1382, was borne to the choir door in the cathedral on a chariot drawn by five horses, which subsequently became the property of the abbey; four horses drew the body of Longley, bishop of the same see from 1406 to 1438 into the nave, these also forming a mortuary offering to the chapter. At the obsequies of King Henry V., his three war-horses were led up to the altar, and formally presented to the church. At the funeral of Prince Arthur, according to Leland's account, "Lord Garrard, the prince's man-at-arms, in the prince's own harness, on a courser richly trapped with velvet embroidered with needlework, rode into the midst of the

choir of Worcester, with a pole-axe in his hands, the point downwards, where the Abbot of Tewkesbury, the gospeller of that mass, received the offering of that horse." The war-horses thus presented to the peaceful occupants of cloisters and parsonages were usually afterwards redeemed by the donors for an equivalent number of sheep. Church hangings and vestments were made from the hearse-cloths and costly trappings. The great wax torches, given sometimes in great numbers on such occasions, as at Henry V.'s funeral, when a thousand of them blazed within the choir, were easily turned to the ordinary use of the church. The offering of mortuaries was abolished by Henry VIII.

The gifts made at the shrines of famous saints within the cathedrals and abbeys of the country were often remarkable both in number and in value. The offerings in money at the shrine of S. Hugh at Lincoln reached in 1365 the sum of £37 14s. 8d., a large amount when we remember the difference in the purchasing power of money between the fourteenth century and our own.* But many gifts were made in kind. The head of S. Hugh, placed in a separate shrine, had a mitre of silver, and about the reliquary which contained it were rings set with precious stones, old gold coins, branches of coral, and other valuable offerings from

* It will illustrate the practical value of this sum to compare with it the terms of a statute passed in 1414 (2 Henry V.), whereby it is ordained that "No yearly chaplain shall take more for his whole wages by year (that is to say, for his board, apparel, and other necessaries) but VII. Marks." Taking the mark at its value of 13s. 4d., the chaplain's income would amount to £4 13s. 4d. Hence the offerings at S. Hugh's shrine were equal to the statutory income of eight chaplains; they would probably be worth at least £750 in modern values.

the devout pilgrims. At Canterbury, the shrine of S. Thomas is described as "blazing with gold and jewels, and embossed with innumerable pearls, and jewels, and rings." Henry VIII., on visiting the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, gave a massive chain of gold for the adornment of the statue; and Erasmus tells us that that shrine looked like "the mansion of the saints, so much did it glitter with gold, jewels, and silver on all sides." These are but samples of the lavish way in which mediæval Englishmen devoted their money and valuable possessions to the enrichment and adornment of the churches. So great was the accumulated wealth in many abbeys, that a special watching-chamber was erected within the church, whence continual watch could be kept over the treasures of the place by a succession of monks.

With all their caution, however, the monks were not always able to defend the shrines from the depredations of villains, who "feared not God nor regarded man;" and then occasionally the saints put forth their wondrous powers, and themselves avenged the violation of their resting-places. Such a miracle once happened at Durham, as the chronicler Simeon tells us. It was in the days when Egelwine ruled the see (1056-1071), that a noble pilgrim to the sacred relics of S. Cuthbert brought in his retinue a varlet, whose greedy heart recked more of gold than of godliness. The mass of money left by recent visitors at the shrine, and still lying in shining heaps upon it, set this man's eyes a-twinkling, and he longed to slip into his leathern pouch some of the silver pieces. Presently he drew near amid the throng, and saw the people all in turn stoop and kiss the cold marble beneath which lay the

remains of so much saintliness. The Tempter, ever at the elbow of the children of men, even when they stand between the altar of God and the tombs of the Blessed, whispered in his ear to do likewise, and at the same time to help himself. Right humbly did the hypocrite bow him at the shrine, and long and fervently did he press his wicked lips to the marble; but it was nothing but a Judas-kiss which he gave, for money, and not for devotion. Rising up, he turned to move away with four or five silver pennies, reft from the blessed S. Cuthbert, in his mouth; and no one had noted aught of his evil deed. But presently that ill-gotten store of coins began to glow within his mouth, as if they were heating in a furnace; fain would the wretch have slipt them into his wallet, nay gladly would he even have spat them out upon the floor in the sight of all men; for they grew ever hotter, and the torment was intolerable. But his jaws clave to each other, as if they had been locked; and strive as he would, he could not open them. Thus was he driven to rush madly through the throng of wonder-stricken folk, waving on high his hands which clutched and snatched at the air, and groaning, like the ox that goes to the slaughter, with wild inarticulate bellowings. At last he betakes him again to the shrine, and flinging him down beside it, asks in his heart for the pardon of his crime, and for the tender pity of the blessed S. Cuthbert; and lo! his lips open, and forth therefrom roll out the coins; and he is at once whole and well again. So mightily, if the chroniclers say sooth, can the saints defend their honour and the charitable offerings of their devout clients.

In 1364 the casket containing the head of S. Hugh of Lincoln was stolen with its venerated contents. In this

case also the thieves gained no advantage by their sacrilegious robbery, for they were discovered, convicted, and hanged.

The offerings at shrines, and the thefts from them, have been terminated among us, not only by the suppression of pilgrimages, but by the wholesale ruin of the shrines themselves, and the scattering of their precious contents. In face of the spirit of destruction let loose at the time of the Reformation, very few of the relics which the English Church possessed were left to her. At this distance of time we can afford to forgive those who sacrilegiously bore away the gold and jewels of reliquaries, and turned them to their own base purposes. But the ruthless dismemberment of the bodies of the saintly dead, and the scattering of their bones upon the dunghills, was an act that could only be perpetrated by godless ruffians; and one for which no pleas of former superstitious usage, no claim of good intentions, can be admitted for one moment as excuses or extenuations.

Westminster still has the relics of S. Edward the Confessor, and Durham claims to possess those of S. Cuthbert, though the fact is disputed. His shrine and that of the Venerable Bede were demolished, the coffins were smashed open with a hammer, and an attempt was actually made to tear in pieces the uncorrupted body of the former! Finally the relics were locked up in the vestry to await further orders; and at a subsequent time were re-interred. It was long thought that Lincoln still had the body of S. Hugh, and a tomb was erected in the seventeenth century over his supposed resting-place; but recently it has been found that no remains are there. At Salisbury are the

relics of S. Osmund, at Canterbury those of S. Alphege, and at Ripon, probably, those of S. Wilfrid. The shrine of S. Thomas of Canterbury, and its famous contents could, of course, look for no mercy from King Henry VIII., and certainly got none; for they recalled the life of an archbishop who had successfully resisted a king. The shrine of S. Alban, recently reconstructed from the fragments variously discovered during the restoration of the cathedral of S. Albans, only for a short time contained the genuine relics of the English proto-martyr. During the Danish incursions the monks, fearing for the safety of their treasures, exhumed the body and translated it to Ely; and in quieter days the monks of Ely refused to return it. On this the brethren at S. Albans "discovered" another body, and declared that the Ely relics were not genuine, but that the real remains of S. Alban had been hidden, not translated. Whose were the bones dispersed at the Reformation, it is therefore impossible to say. The shrine is now, of course, a mere cenotaph.

Doubtless there are, hidden away by pious hands, in many churches up and down the country the once-honoured relics of saints of old; but their hiding-places have been forgotten. Within quite recent years the body of S. Eanswythe, the abbess and patroness of Folkestone, has been discovered within a leaden casket in the parish church of the town; and it may be that yet others may be found elsewhere in the course of time. Within the crypt of S. Lawrence's Church, at Chorley, lie the remains of S. Lawrence. These were brought from Normandy in 1442 by Sir Rowland Standish, and placed by him where they still lie. Though no one can suppose them to be the genuine relics of the Roman deacon of the third century, they are probably those of one of the

less known saints of the same name, of whom there are several. The dismembered body of the best known S. Lawrence, with fragments of the grid-iron on which he suffered, of his dalmatic, and other relics of him, are preserved in several of the churches in the city of Rome.

CHAPTER XII.

Conclusion.

THUS have we endeavoured briefly, yet clearly, to trace the development of some usages in the Church, and to follow some portion of the history of her fabrics and their furniture; and we have noted the fancies and superstitions, some merely quaint and innocent, some heathenish and degrading, which have sprung up in the course of the ages around her, or have continued as relics of the days that were before her.

Time was when many of these legends and charms and folk-cures were something of party questions. When some, recognizing the sacredness of the things with which they had become so closely linked, were willing strenuously to defend the false for the sake of the true; and others, disgusted by the low ideals of high things which these fancies seemed to involve, were ready to risk the true if they could but eradicate the false. Now we are able to look on all sides of these matters with calmer eyes. We see nothing damnable in ringing bells, or playing organs, or in devout attitudes in divine service; yet we do not feel that truth and righteousness in any way demand that we should defend the mockeries of a boy-bishop's investiture, or the frivolity of ball-play in the choir.

Again, it is not so long since the majority of Englishmen, priding themselves—perhaps somewhat unduly—on their

enlightenment and freedom from every taint of superstition, regarded all such matters as charms and talismans, the folk-lore fancies of days and things lucky and unlucky, and cognate ideas, as examples of childish imbecility, unworthy not only of credence, but even of attention from men of education. Here, too, the times have changed, and we with them; for we have awakened to the fact that even the games of children may enshrine something of the past history of the race, and that childish fancies may teach us much of the mental habit of our forefathers, who lived when the world was young.

But these tales of old, sometimes so wild and weird, acquire a new and living force if we realize that they are not after all characteristic exclusively of a type of mind, or of modes of thought, that are extinct. The mental condition which weaves legends and fashions mysterious wonders may be found to-day, when circumstances arise to call it into play. It is said that in Italy, full of the new life of nationality, and enamoured of the new light of constitutional and intellectual freedom — that under such improbable surroundings a perfect system of myths grew up about the personality of Garibaldi, even during his life-time. His famous crimson shirt was said to be dyed in the blood of his enemies; he himself was believed to be perfectly invulnerable; he was alleged to have satisfied the thirst of a parched and exhausted army, like a second Moses, by firing a cannon at a rock, and so producing streams of refreshing water; and the storm which swept the district at his funeral was firmly believed to have been sent by the power of his enraged spirit, because his executors buried his body instead of cremating it, as he had wished. When

such legends could spring up in the middle of the nineteenth century among a European peasantry, we need not wonder at the deification of the heathen heroes, nor treat the most marvellous of the tales of the mediæval saints as the work of a people beneath our consideration. Obviously we must reckon this myth-making tendency as a permanent factor in human nature; a factor which may lie dormant at times, and which does not reveal itself always in the same fashion, but one which may nevertheless be expected to prove its existence from time to time.

One further consideration may arise in the mind of the Churchman as he glances over the ecclesiastical folk-lore of England. As the shadow proves the existence of the substance, as hypocrisy is said to show that even vice appreciates virtue; so does superstition bear witness to the soundness of the Faith. It may be questioned whether there is any falsehood which is not in some way an imitation, a perversion, a sham of a truth; and thus in the theories and fancies, wild and childish as they at first appear, of our traditional folk-lore, we see in most cases but distorted pictures of greater and more solid things. We may not now believe that disaster will follow immediately on a theft of flowers from a churchyard, that premature death awaits him who, even innocently, helps to pull down a part of a church, that walking round an altar or wearing a ring made from "a Sacrament shilling" will ensure bodily health. But we do believe that there is a special sanctity in the hallowed ground where lie the bodies of those who have fallen asleep in Christ; we do believe that our churches are signs and types of that One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Church, in which daily we profess our faith, which is the

Mystic Body of the Divine Redeemer, and which is, in the startlingly strong words of S. Paul (Eph. i., 23), "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." And we do believe that from the altar of God flows forth that "grace to help," which is given us through the Sacramental Presence of Him, who is the Saviour of the body as well as of the soul.

Indexes.

I.—Subjects. II.—Places.

Index I.—SUBJECTS.

Abbey churches, the largest, 40
Ace of spades, story of, 45
Acrobats on steeples, 46
Adyta, 203
Affusion, Baptism by, 171
Age for Baptism, 169; for Confirmation, 175
Agnes's, S., Day, 232
Alban, S., shrine of, 250
All Saints' Tower, Derby, 33, 46, 50, 73
All Souls' Day, 90
Alms-dish, box, etc., 238
Alms in the Prayer-book, 236
Altar candles, 225
Altar-rails, 228
Ambo, 134
Andrewes, Bishop, 228
Angel Steeple, Canterbury, 50
Animals, burial of, 81
Anointing with oil in Baptism, 174; at Confirmation, 176
Antiphonal singing, 218
Antiquity of church sites, 11, 15
"Apostolical Constitutions," 28, 31, 111, 161
Apse, use of, 28, 207
Art in the early Church, 4, 5
Articles found in graves, 81
Artifices of preachers, 142
Atrium, 52, 78
Attendance at funerals, 94
Augustine, S., quoted, 166

Bachelors' Aisle, Yarmouth, 33
Bags for alms, 238
Ball-playing in church, 213
Bampton Lectures, 143
Banks, the acrobat, 47
Banns of marriage, 178
Baptismal churches, 155
Baptisteries, 154
Barclay, Alexander, quoted, 109
Barnabas' Day, S., 212
Basin for alms, 238
Battle of Neville's Cross, 48, 233
Bay used at funerals, 88
Bearers at funerals, 94
Bearing-cloth, 164
Beating the bounds, 213
Beaumont and Fletcher, quoted, 188
Becon on music, 219
Bede, the Venerable, 2, 80, 249; his chair, 201
Bema, 203
Benches, 104; bench-ends, 105
Bentley, Richard, 143
Bequests to churches, 104, 114, 115, 244
"Best man," 188
Betrothal ring, 190
Beuno's mark, S., 232
Bible, the, in the Church, 152
Biddenden Maids, the, 75
Biers, 84
Bishopping, 176
Black Death, the, 33
Blessing the font, 161
Boils, cure for, 64
Borlase, quoted, 14
Bowing towards the altar, 227
Boxes for alms, 238
Boy-bishops, 214
Boyle Lectures, 143
Bradford, John, 105
Breaking the ring, 196
Bridal dress, 184

Bride's maids, 187; mother, 188
Briefs, 34, 241, 242
Bristol Cathedral lectern, 150
Bronze fonts, 155
Browne, Sir Thomas, quoted, 56, 63, 78, 80, 81, 88, 96, 97
Browne, Wm., quoted, 189
Buckinghamshire folk-lore, 20
Buggane, the, 26
Bulls, legends of, 22, 27
Burial in churches, 78; in churchyards, 52, 78; on the north side of the church, 65, 79; in woollen, 92
Butler, Samuel, quoted, 194
Buying wives, 197

Caistor gad-whip, 152
Candlemas, 131, 211
Canon law on marriage, 182
Canons of the English Church, 52, 127, 137, 139, 152, 168
Canopies over fonts, 159
Cantoris, 218
Cap for use at Baptism, 166
Capitula of Theodulph, 137, 139
Captives, alms for release of, 243
Carol Ewyn, 220
Carol singing, 39, 220
Cartwright, Thomas, quoted, 195, 197
Cartwright, William, quoted, 85
Carvals, 220
Carvings on churches, curious, 17, 24, 33, 34, 45, 209; on bench-ends, 105; on fonts, 156
Casaubon, quoted, 120
Cats, legends of, 20, 64
Catafalque, 91
Cathedrals, largest in England, 40
Cattle-plague, hymn for, 223
Celtic sacred places, 12
Chancel, the, 204
Chapelle ardente, 91
Chapel Royal, S. James's, 234; Whitehall, 235
Charles I., patent of, 240
Chatterton's poems, 47
Cheshire folk-lore, 67
Chevy Chase, ballad of, 232
Childermas, 215
Choir, the, 204
Choral services, 218
Choristers at Lichfield, 213; Ripon, 132
Church likened to a ship, 28, 101
Church-ales, 71
Churches, burial in, 78; covered by sea, 37; by sand, 38; cruciform, 28; octagonal, 28; wooden, 28; orientation of, 31
Church-porch, marriage in, 189
Churchyards, circular, 12; cross in, 68, 74; north side of, 65, 79
Chrisom, 165
Chrisom-child, 166
Christmas customs, 114, 130, 132
Chrysostom, S., 16
Circular churchyards, 12
Civil Wars, churches during the, 50, 224
Classic use of roses, 57
Clipping the church, 71
Clocks in church towers, 48
Cock, legend of, 26
Coffins, use of, 84
Colours for bridal dress, 184, 185
Columba, S., 22
Confirmation, 174
Consecration of water for Baptism, 161, 163
Constantine, S., 11, 28, 78
Conversion of Northumbria, 2
Cornish bench-ends, 105; folk-lore, 19, 21, 38, 44, 48, 57, 59, 63, 76, 97, 124, 169, 171, 184, 225, 239
Corpse-candles, 95
Corpus Christi, 146
Cosin, Bishop, 211
Councils and Synods, Braga, 78; Carnot, 216; Cashel, 170; Cealchythe, 168, 170; Durham, 158, 193; Exeter, 54, 57, 104, 175; London, 167, 168, 174, 178; Meaux, 155; Mentz, 167; Nantes, 78;

Nice, 216; Oxford, 168; Scotland, 69, 167, 205; Toledo, 203; Westminster, 174; York, 167
Court of Arches, ruling of, 127
Covers for fonts, 158
Cows, legends of, 29, 47; carving of, 17; superstition concerning, 58
Cranmer, quoted, 160
Cruciform churches, 28
Crying at Baptism, 171
Cup, bridal, 200
Curious churches, 41; gravestones, 98; steeples, 51
Cuthbert, Archbishop, 52
Cuthbert, S., 16, 247, 249,
Cyprian, S., quoted, 161

Dancing in church, 117
David, S., 96
Davenant, quoted, 194
Deacons, 237
Death tokens, 48, 83, 226
Decani, 218
Decorations at Christmas, 130; Whitsuntide, 132; S. Barnabas' Day, 132, 212; of graves, 90
Deer, legend of, 21
Dekker, quoted, 200
Derbyshire folk-lore, 14
De Rossi, quoted, 5
Destruction of heathen temples, 11; of churches by fire, 35
Devil, legends of, 21, 44
Devil's door, 171
Devonshire folk-lore, 21, 64, 83, 125, 175, 225, 239
Diabolic possession of churches, 25
Dice in church, 226
Divination by wells, 14; of various kinds, 124; penance for, 122
Dog Noper, 114
Dogs in church, 109, 114
Dog-whipper, 114
Doles, 75, 243
Donne, Dr., 89
Donnellan Lectures, 143
Dooms, 126
Dorsetshire folk-lore, 76
Doves, legend of, 20
Drayton, quoted, 85
Dress at church, 113; of brides, 184
Dropping the ring, 195
Druidic regard for wells, 14
Dryden, quoted, 92
Duke of Northumberland's Maundy, 236
Dunstan, S., 8
Durandus, quoted, 79
Durham folk-lore, 83, 99, 188, 240
Dust from church floor, 124
Dydd Degwm Wyn, 231

Eagle lecterns, 149
Eanswythe, S., relics of, 250
Early Christian art, 45
Earth to earth, 97
Easter customs, 90, 114, 117, 213
Edward the Confessor, S., 29
Edwin and Emma, 100
Edwin, King of Northumbria, 2
Endowed sermons, 143, 226
Epilepsy, cure of, 124
Epiphany, royal offerings at, 234
Epitaphs, 99
Erasmus, quoted, 247
Essex folk-lore, 188
Eucharist at weddings, 199
Eusebius, quoted, 16, 204
Eva, name of, 172
Evagrius, 28
Evidential value of myths, 254
Excerptions of Egbert, 52, 137
Exhumation, 97

Fairchild sermon, 145
Fairies, doings of, 20
Fairs in churches, 116; in churchyards, 69
Fald-stool, 153
"Falling over the Pulpit," 179
Feasting in church, 117
Fifeshire proverb, 125
Fillets for Confirmation, 176
Finan, S., 29

Fire, destruction by, 35; at York, 150; Insurance against, 35 (*note*)
First burial in a churchyard, 80; Baptism in new font, 164
Fits, cure of, 225
Flavel, Rev. Thos., 59
Floors covered with rushes, 102; pea-straw, 103; grass, 104
Flowering Sunday, 90
Flowers at funerals, 83; at weddings, 189
Fly, legend of a, 26
Font, material of, 155; shape of, 156; cover for, 158; canopy over, 159; blessing of, 161; decoration of, 156; position of, 159; Puritan objections to, 159
Fontinalia, 14
Forbidding the banns, 180
Fortified church towers, 49
Friday weddings, 184
Funds for church building, 32
Funerals, garlands at, 86; sermons at, 113, 147; of royal persons, 95

Gad-whip, Caistor, 152
Gallery, 111
Games in churchyards, 69
Garibaldi, myths concerning, 253
Garlands, funeral, 86
Gay, quoted, 63, 85, 87
Gayer, Sir John, 144
George, S., 126
George II., funeral of, 95; III., anecdote of, 46
Germoe, S., 76
Ghosts, Dr. Johnson on, 3
Gibbets, alms for, 240
Gilds, 32, 115
Gloucestershire folk-lore, 82
Godparents, 166, 167; at Confirmation, 175
"God's Acre," 52
Googe, Barnaby, quoted, 117, 130
Grass of churchyard, 58; on church floor, 104
Grave-merels, 83
Graves, orientation of, 79
Grave-stones, curious, 98
Grazing the churchyard, 58
Gregory the Great, S., quoted, 4, 12
Green an unlucky colour, 184
Gresham, Sir John, funeral of, 95
Grindal's Injunctions, 103
Growth of Church folk-lore, 1

Habingdon, quoted, 92
Hair, how worn at weddings, 185
Hall-dog pews, 109
Hangings for the choir, 211
Hare, legend of a, 21
Hats worn in church, 108, 113
Haunted churchyards, 58
Hearne, the antiquary, 80
Hearse, *see* Herse
Heathen usages retained by the Church, 4, 5; temples destroyed, 11; temples consecrated, 4, 12; regard for wells, 13, 14, 15
Helena, S., 111
Hemp-seed as a charm, 62
Henry V., funeral of, 95, 245
Herefordshire folk-lore, 239
Herrick, quoted, 191
Herse, 91, 148, 246
High pews, 107
Holy Sepulchre, church of the, 28
Holy wells, 13, 14, 15, 164
Homilies, 139
Honorius, 11
Hood, Tom, alluded to, 62
Hooker, quoted, 195, 197
Hooper, quoted, 119
Horses offered at the altar, 245; skulls of, found in church, 47
Hour-glass in pulpits, 135
Houselling-cloth, 229
Howel Dha, 52
Hugh, S., 246, 248, 249
Hulsean Lectures, 143
Human sacrifices, 22, 81, 164
Hunt, Holman, 128
Huntingdonshire folk-lore, 226
Hymns, 221; sung on steeples, 48

Immersion, Baptism by, 170
Impressing choristers, 217
Ingulphus, 29
Inscriptions on fonts, 157
Insurance against fire, 35 (*note*)
Interest of folk-lore, 252
Irish folk-lore, 84, 196
Italian churches, 31

James I., story concerning, 142
Jerome, S., quoted, 130
John, King, and Pandulf, 31
Johnson, Dr., quoted, 3
Jonson, Ben, quoted, 91, 120, 173
Jordan water used for Baptism, 163
Judges' attendance at church, 116

Kelly, the alchymist, 196
Kent folk-lore, 75
King, Bishop Oliver, 33
King's sympathy, 244
Kiss, the nuptial, 198
Knights Templars, 30

Laity in the chancel, 205
Lammas Day, 231
Lancashire folk-lore, 17, 20
Land of the Lyonnesse, 38
Land measures within the church, 120
Land tenures, 89, 104, 114, 233
Largest churches in England, 40
Latimer, quoted, 140
Laud, Archbishop, 113, 117, 227, 228
Law courts in churchyards, 70
Lawrence, S., relics of, 250
Lead fonts, 155; from church windows, 124
Lectern, 149
Lectures, 143, 144
Left-handed Confirmation, 175
Legends, meaning of, 7, 8
Leicestershire folk-lore, 20, 97
Lights in church, 211, 225, 246
Lincolnshire folk-lore, 82, 152, 180
Lion sermon, the, 144
Litany-desk, 153
Loaf-mass, 231
Lofts, 111
Long-bows of yew, 54
Longevity of yews, 56
Longfellow, quoted, 52
Long sermons, 135
Lych-gates, 67

Malkin, quoted, 69
Mallet, referred to, 100
Manx folk-lore, 25, 26, 27, 36, 67, 84, 94, 98, 115, 122, 123, 188, 220, 227
Marriage in church porch, 189; in a sheet, 186; proverbs concerning, 183
Markets in churchyards, 69, 70
Mark's Eve, S., 59
Marston, quoted, 199
Marprelate tracts, 80
Mary, Queen of Scots, 98
Maundy gifts, 235
May Day, 64
May marriages, 184
Mayors' attendance at church, 115
Mediæval preaching, 137, 139
Memorial services, 148
Mermaid, legend of a, 106
Metal for wedding-ring, 193, 196
Midnight mass, 221
Midsummer Eve, 61, 62
Mileto, Abbot, 4
Military use of churches, 49, 50
Milton, quoted, 13, 14, 66
Minstrels, 223; gallery for, 224
"Minstrel's pillar," 224
Miracle plays, 70
Miraculous intimation of sites, 17, 20
Misericordes, 208
Mistletoe, use of, 131
Mocking the Church, 180
Money given at marriage, 197
Montgomery, Jas., quoted, 61, 62
Morocco, a performing horse, 47
Mortuary offerings, 244
Mottoes on dials, 77
Movable pulpits, 134
Moyer Lecture, the, 143
Music at weddings, 188, 201; the Reformers on use of, 219
Myths, growth of, 253

Names, baptismal, 171
Nave, meaning of, 102
Neville's Cross, battle of, 48, 233
Newton, Thos., quoted, 102
Nicholas' Day, S., 215
Ninian, S., 29
Norfolk folk-lore, 44, 99, 125, 170
North, a type of the Devil, 66; side of the churchyard, 65, 79
Northamptonshire folk-lore, 97
Northumbrian folk-lore, 64, 82, 83, 201; conversion, 2
Noteworthy steeples, 50
Nottinghamshire folk-lore, 179, 240
Number of sponsors, 167
Nuptial kiss, 198; masses, 199

Oblations of animals, 231, 232
Octagonal churches, 28; fonts, 156
Offering enemies, 233
Offerings at shrines, 32, 245
Offertory, meaning of, 237
Offrwm Gelyn, 233
Organs, 219, 220, 224
Oie'l Verrey, 220
Old S. Paul's Cathedral, 46, 48, 89, 119, 120, 142, 211, 233
Orange blossom, 185
Orchestra, parish, 223
Orientation of churches, 31; of graves, 79
Oswald, S., 21, 24
Overbury, Sir Thos., quoted, 84
Oxfordshire folk-lore, 21, 25, 75

Painted windows, 126
Paintings in churches, 126
Pallium (Archbishop's), 233; nuptial, 185
Palm Sunday customs, 55, 74, 90
Parents as sponsors, 166, 168
Parish churches, the largest, 40; clerks, 222; coffins, 84; stocks, 74
Parker, Archbishop, quoted, 160
Paschal Candle, 211
Patents, or briefs, 241, 242
Patrick, S., 22, 31
Paul's, S., Cathedral, 12, 40, 46, 119, 120, 128, 143, 238 (see also *Old S. Paul's*); Cross, 74; School, 214; Walk, 119
Paulinus, S., 2; of Nola, 16, 130, 204, 221
Pea-straw for church floors, 103
Peckham's Constitutions, 138
Pelican lecterns, 151
Penance, public, 75, 121
Penitential of Egbert, 167
Pennant, quoted, 164
Pepys, quoted, 89
Perthshire folk-lore, 180, 220
Peter's chains, S., 231
Petting-stone, 201
Pews, 105
Pigs, legends of, 20, 24, 25
Pilkington, quoted, 46, 48
"Places where they sing," 206
Playing at ball in church, 213
Pope, Alexander, quoted, 93
Posies, 191
Position of font, 159
Posy-rings, 191
Praise-God Barbones, 173
Preaching crosses, 74
Presbytery, 203
Private pews, 109
Probus, S., 44
Proclamation of Henry VIII., 216
Prosper of Aquitaine, 12
Public Penance, 75, 121
Pulling down churches unlucky, 36
Pulpitres, 134
Pulpitum, 134
Puritan objections to art, 126; fonts, 159; funeral sermons, 147; liturgy, 107; music, 219; wedding-ring, 194
Puritanical names, 173; sermons, 135

Qualifications of sponsors, 168

Ravens, superstition concerning, 36
Redeeming captives, 243
Regard for holy sites, 36

Relics in English churches, 249
Religion and the people, 89
Removal of churches, 20
Restoration of Bath Abbey, 33
Ring-finger, 192
Rings, wedding, 190
Rites of Durham, 17
"Roaring Bull o' Bagbury," 27
Robin Hood, story of, 33
Rood-screens, 204
Rosemary at funerals, 85; at weddings, 146
Roses in churchyards, 57
Round churches, 28, 29
Rowe, quoted, 189
Royal arms, 129; Epiphany offerings, 234; Maundy gifts, 235; names, 172; prebend, 206
Ruined churches, services in, 39
Rush-bearing, 102
Rushes for church floors, 102, 189
Rush rings, 193
Ruskin on legends, 7

Sacrament money, 124, 238; wine, 225
Sacrarium, 203
Sacred sites of Paganism, 23, 24, 27
Sand, churches covered by, 38
Scaffold, a gallery, 111
Scandinavian legends, 25
Scottish churches, 15; folk-lore, 184, 220
Scriptural names, 171
Sea, advance of, on coast, 37
Seasons for Baptism, 160, 162; for matrimony, 182
Seats in church, 104
Secular uses of churchyards, 68
Separation of sexes in church, 111
Sepulchre's, S., churches, 30
Sermons at funerals, 113; at weddings, 146, 147; Latimer's, 140
Seward, Miss, quoted, 87
Sexes divided in church, 111
Shakespeare, quoted, 54, 56, 58, 59, 66, 73, 79, 83, 84, 85, 87, 88, 91, 94, 96, 97, 120, 165, 166, 173, 183, 185, 191, 194, 199, 200, 201
Sheet, marriage in a, 186
Shrines, famous, 246; offerings at, 32, 246
Ship, an emblem of the Church, 28, 101
Shropshire folk-lore, 21, 23, 27, 37, 48, 63, 67, 68, 69, 90, 116, 117, 132, 169, 171, 181, 195, 239
Shrovetide customs, 71
Sibrit, 179
Silver font, 155
Simeon, Stylites, S., 28
Singing hymns on church towers, 48, 49
Sites, regard for, sacred, 36; miraculously indicated, 16, 17, 20
Smallest church in England, 40
Socrates, the historian, 16, 111
Somersetshire folk-lore, 33, 34, 120
Speght, quoted, 73
Sponsors, 166
Sprinkling in Baptism, 171
Spurrings, 179
Staffordshire folk-lore, 14, 20, 59, 98, 132, 169, 240
Stalls, 207
Standards of measurement in church, 120, 126
State attendances, 115
Statues in churches, 126
Steeples, use of, 43; fortified, 49; famous, 50
Sternhold and Hopkins, 221
Stichild's penance, 121
Still-born infants, 83
Stocks, parish, 74
Stone seats, 104
Strange names, 173
Straw for church floors, 103
Stubs, quoted, 72, 105
Substitutes for palms, 55
Suffolk folk-lore, 188
Sunday funerals, 82; weather, 125; weddings, 183

Sun-dials, 76
Sun worship, relics of, 96
Surname of bride, 199
Surpliced choirs, 206
Sussex folk-lore, 21
Swithin, S., legend of, 79
Synod, *see* Council.

Taleth, the, 185
Talismans from churchyards, 63
Tate and Brady, 222
Taylor, Jeremy, quoted, 166
Taylor, the Water Poet, quoted, 173
Temple Church, 30
Temples, Pagan, consecrated, 4, 12; destroyed, 11
Tertullian, quoted, 16, 190
Thefts from shrines, 247; from churchyards, 57
Theodosius, 11
Thomas, name of, 172
Thornhill, Sir Jas., 128
Thoroughfares in churches, 119
Thorpe, Wm., on music, 220
"Three-decker" pulpits, 136
Thursday weddings, 183
Thusiasterion, 203
Toothache, cure for, 63
Torches at funerals, 95
Towers, the Devil's dislike to, 44; use of, 43; fortified, 49; famous, 50
Trees in churchyards, 53; within churches, 133
Trine immersion, 170
Twin churches, 39
Tyndale, Wm., quoted, 160, 176, 194

Unction at Baptism, 174; at Confirmation, 176
Unlawful seasons for marriage, 182

Valentinian, 11
Valentine's, S., Eve, 63
Veil, bridal, 185
Veni, Creator, 221
Virgin's funeral garlands, 86
Volowing, 176

Wakes, 68; at Shrewsbury, 39
Waldron, quoted, 188
Warburtonian Lecture, 143
Water, uses of in the early Church, 16
Wearing hats in church, 108, 113
Weather-lore, 79, 83, 125
Wedding-ring, 190; sermons, 146; folk-lore, 48, 67
Wells, Pagan regard for, 13, 14, 15
Welsh churchyards, 12, 15; folk-lore, 19, 20, 25, 27, 57, 65, 69, 88, 90, 95, 96, 125, 164, 221, 232, 233, 238
Westminster Abbey, 29, 95
West side of church, burial on, 79
Wheatley, quoted, 193
Whip-dog Day, 214
Whips for dogs, 114
White, Gilbert, quoted, 53, 65, 86, 108
Whitsuntide customs, 90, 132
Whooping-cough, cure for, 63
Widows at weddings, 188
Wife-capture, 188
William of Perth, S., 32
Witchcraft, 20, 64, 121, 125
Wilfrid, S., 32
Wiltshire folk-lore, 239
Wilson, Bishop, quoted, 123
Windows, painted, 126
Wood, Anthony, quoted, 127, 196
Wooden churches, 28; pulpits, 135; fonts, 155
Woollen, burial in, 92
Worcestershire folk-lore, 70
Wordsworth, quoted, 184
Worship, meaning of, 197
Written sermons, 138

Yews in churchyards, 53
York Fabric Rolls, quoted, 70
Yorkshire holy wells, 15; folk-lore, 24, 48, 82, 96, 117, 164, 190, 214, 223, 240

INDEX II.—PLACES.

NOTE.—In the following Index the names of places beginning with *Saint*, as S. Albans, are placed under the letter S; names having a distinguishing adjective, as Little Maplestead, are ranged under the initial of the first word in each case.

Abbey Dore, 41
Abbott's Ann, 88
Abingdon, 42, 145
Acaster Malbis, 129
Acton Burwell, 88
Albrighton, 40
Aldborough, 37
Aldingham, 77
Alford (Lincolnshire), 82
Alfreton, 88
Alfriston, 21, 29
Altarnun, 21, 106
Ambleside, 103
Antioch, 28
Ashburton, 55
Ashby Folville, 156
Ashford-on-the-Water, 88
Ashill, 56
Ashton-under-Lyne, 45, 186
Astley Abbots, 88
Athens, 51
Auburn, 37
Aveley, 109

Bagbury, 27
Bakewell, 88
Baldwin, 36
Ballaugh, 122
Bangor, 20
Barford S. Michael's, 75
Barnard Castle, 94
Barnes, 57
Barnetby-le-Wold, 155
Barthomley, 67
Baschurch, 21, 48
Baslow, 114
Bath, 33
Beaconsfield, 108
Beckenham, 67, 238
Bedale, 49
Bemerton, 40
Bernard's Mount, 18
Berrington, 118
Berwick-on-Tweed, 42
Bettws-Gwerfil-Goch, 12
Beverley, 40, 209, 210, 224
Biddenden, 75
Bilston, 132, 240
Birmingham, 71
Bisley, 15
Bittersley, 164
Blackpool, 37
Blickling, 238
Blyth, 126
Blythborough, 238
Bologna, 31
Boston, 50, 209, 210
Bottesford, 104
Bovey-Tracey, 81
Bowes, 99
Bradford-on-Avon, 41, 71
Bradley, 157
Braga, 78
Braunton, 21
Breedon, 20, 23
Breedon-on-the-Hill, 109
Brent Tor, 21
Bristol, 47, 116, 131, 150, 151, 209, 210
Broughton, 21, 152
Bryn-y-Hynnon, 19
Burgh-on-the-Sands, 49
Burnham Deepdale, 157
Burnsall, 67
Burrough, 157
Burstall, 37
Bury S. Edmunds, 29, 233

Caistor, 84, 85, 152
Calverley, 114
Cambridge, 30, 135, 140, 143
Canterbury, 50, 55, 119, 149, 156, 161, 207, 219, 227, 241, 243, 247, 250
Capel Garmon, 21, 23
Carnot, 216

Cartmel, 17, 51, 210
Cashel, 22, 170
Castle Acre, 158
Castleford, 130
Castle Morton, 133
Caxton, 105
Cerrig-y-druidion, 12, 25
Chaddesden, 73
Charlcombe, 41
Chester, 35, 210, 213
Chesterfield, 51
Chester-le-Street, 16
Chichester, 50, 116, 210, 224, 241
Chiltern All Saints, 186
Chinnor, 128
Chorley, 250
Christel, 114
Cilcenin, 12
Cleveland, 82
Clewer, 155
Clungunford, 117
Clynnog Fawr, 114, 232
Coates, 41
Coleshill, 156
Cologne, 31
Constantinople, 28, 51
Corwen, 21
Coventry, 40
Cromer, 242
Crosmere, 37
Cross Canonby, 157
Crowan, 225
Crowle, 74, 77, 224
Croyland, 29, 209
Culbone, 41

Darley, 56
Darlington, 210
Deerhurst, 156
Dereham, 156
Deptford, 104
Derby, 33, 46, 50, 73, 243
Derwen, 12
Devonport, 83
Doncaster, 51
Donington, 15, 40
Dorchester, 155
Douglas, 36
Dover, 30
Dublin, 135, 143
Dulwich, 157
Dunsby, 157
Dunwich, 38
Durham, 16, 29, 39, 47, 48, 98, 112, 114, 116, 119, 121, 122, 151, 193, 205, 211, 212, 227, 233, 245, 247, 249

Easby, 109
Easingwold, 84
East Dereham, 15
East Halton, 114
Eastville, 31
East Wretham, 158
Ecclesfield, 114
Edgmond, 71
Edmonton, 83
Efenechtyd, 12, 155, 239
Ellesmere, 71
Elsdon, 47
Ely, 35, 50, 116, 210, 250
Exeter, 54, 57, 104, 116, 121, 175, 210, 224
Eyam, 87

Farndish, 41
Farndop, 90
Farringdon, 86
Fenton, 41
Finchale, 39
Fincham, 157
Finedon, 105
Fisherty Brow, 36
Fishlake, 60
Folkestone, 250
Ford, 61
Fountains, 56
Frampton, 181
Frampton-on-Severn, 155
Fulbourne, 135

Garstang, 76
Geddington, 105
Gedney, 186
Geneu'r Glyn, 19
Glastonbury, 29
Gloucester, 210, 216
Goosnargh, 77
Gorton Green, 186
Gosport, 89

Great Grimsby, 241, 242
Great Toller, 157
Greenstead, 28
Guernsey, 155
Gwithian, 38

Haddon, 148
Hadstock, 35
Hagworthingham, 242
Halifax, 158
Halsworthy, 239
Hambleton, 76
Hanchurch, 20
Hanwood, 88
Happisburgh, 156
Harlington, 56
Harlow, 157
Heanor, 88
Heapy, 76
Hedon, 51
Helmsley, 70
Hensall, 229
Hepworth, 158
Hereford, 74, 112, 210
Heton, 215
Hexham, 111
Hingham, 157
Hounslow, 56
Hoxton, 145
Hundon, 152
Hurstpierpoint, 226
Huttoft, 157
Hyde, 215 (*note*)
Hyssington, 27

Iona, 22
Ipswich, 38
Isle of Wight, 41

Jarrow, 201
Jerusalem, 51, 158
Jesmond, 15

Kempsey, 133
Kentchester, 157
Kentford, 35
Kerry, 12
Kilgrimal, 37
Kilkenny, 135
Kilnsea, 37
Kilpeck, 41
Kirkburn, 156
Kirkby Lonsdale, 36
Kirk Malew, 123
Kirk Michael, 122
Kirton-in-Lindsey, 228

Laceby, 61
Lamesley, 93
Langley Marsh, 105
Laon, 31
Launcells, 106
Lavenham, 105
Leamington Priory, 229
Leeds, 135
Leicester, 157
Lew Trenchard, 105
Leyland, 30
Lezayre, 123
Lichfield, 15, 50, 91, 213
Lincoln, 50, 149, 204, 205, 210, 227, 241, 246, 248, 249
Lindisfarne, 29
Little Dunkeld, 15
Little Maplestead, 30
Little Ness, 88
Liverpool, 74
Llanarmon, 12
Llandegla, 15
Llandysylo, 26, 173
Llandyrnog, 12
Llan-Elidan, 12
Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, 20
Llanfechain, 12
Llanfor, 25
Llangar, 19
Llan-garw-gwyn, 19
Llanllechid, 20, 23
Llanynys, 114
London, 12, 30, 35, 40, 55, 84, 103, 115, 128, 135, 140, 142, 143, 157, 161, 164, 167, 168, 174, 178, 187, 212, 238, 241, 243
Long Melford, 105
Louth, 51
Ludlow, 15, 32, 50
Lullington, 40
Luton, 159
Lutterworth, 126, 135

Lydford, 124
Lynn, 149, 156

Mablethorpe S. Peter, 37
Madeley, 67
Madron, 75
Maestricht, 208
Malmesbury, 29
Malta, 113
Manchester, 76, 126, 210
Manghold, 98
Marr, 130
Matlock, 88
Meaux, 155
Melsonby, 49
Melton, 157
Melton Mowbray, 157
Mentz, 167
Metz, 31
Middleham, 49
Milton Abbas, 242
Mitton, 156
Monksilver, 34
Moulton, 127
Mullion, 106
Musselburgh, 15

Nantes, 78
Nantwich, 209
Nazianzum, 28
Nettlecombe, 105, 156
Newburn-on-Tyne, 93
Newcastle-on-Tyne, 15, 50, 122
Newington, 156
Newstead, 150
Newton (Cumberland), 49
Nice, 216
Northampton, 30
Northorpe, 109
Norton, 182
Norton (Staffs.), 89
Norwich, 74, 103, 115, 119, 135, 149, 156, 159, 207, 238, 241

Ockley, 57
Old Weston, 103
Orford, 158
Ormskirk, 45
Osmotherley, 223
Oswestry, 196

Otley, 186
Ottery S. Mary, 50
Out Newton, 37
Owthorne, 37
Oxford, 35, 75, 128, 143, 149, 156, 165, 168, 173, 176, 227

Paddington, 244
Padstow, 38
Parham, 155
Paris, 31, 76
Patrington, 156
Pavenham, 104
Payerne, 102
Penkridge, 210
Penzance, 124
Perranzabuloe, 38
Pershore, 70
Plumpstead Magna, 155
Plympton S. Mary, 21
Pontefract, 41, 50
Pool, 242
Poughill, 106
Powderham, 50
Prestwich, 45
Probus, 44
Pulpit, 19
Puxton, 120

Raby, 233
Ravenspur, 37
Reading, 126, 211
Reculver, 38
Redcliffe, 47
Ripon, 16, 32, 91, 132, 209, 210, 250
Rochdale, 21, 23
Rochester, 32, 241
Rome, 31, 51, 102, 232, 250
Ross, 133
Ruabon, 173
Rudstone, 24

Sabul, 31
Salamanca, 31
S. Albans, 135, 250
Salisbury, 46, 50, 119, 149, 161, 214, 215, 249
Salkeld, 49
S. Anthony, 110, 157

S. Blazey, 225
S. Budeaux, 50
Scarborough, 61
Scilly, 113
S. David's, 114, 206
S. Dennis, 76
Selborne, 86, 108
Selham, 41
S. Enodock, 38
S. Ewe, 51
S. Germans, 229
S. Germoe, 76
Shaw (Lancs.), 76
Shaw (Staffs.), 89
Shellesley, 105
Sheppey, Isle of, 69
Sherborne, 210
Shrawardine, 88
Shrewsbury, 39, 46, 70, 87, 91
S. Ives, 226
S. Just-in-Penwith, 125
Skirbeck, 180
Skyv'og, 96
S. Levan, 39
S. Mary Overy, 215
Southampton, 89, 113
South Leigh, 126
Southwark, 241
Southwell, 150
Stafford, 157
Staindrop, 81
Stamford, 51
Stamford Bridge, 70
Stamford-in-the-Vale, 114
Stanhope, 87
Stoke S. Milborough, 15, 69
Stoke-upon-Tern, 21, 68
Stonehenge, 12
Stopham, 41
Stratford-on-Avon, 126
Strathfillan, 15
Stratton, 106
Streatham, 135
S. Trinian, 26
Swaffham Prior, 40

Talland, 19, 105
Tansfield, 91
Taunton, 50
Tavistock, 114
Tettenhall, 98
Tewkesbury, 40
Thornton (Dorset), 76
Thrapston, 242
Tiddenham, 155
Tiverton, 50
Tonge, 89
Towednack, 44
Townstall, 50
Tremeirchion, 12
Trèves, 31
Trimley, 40
Trull, 106
Trysull, 114
Tunstall, 37
Twyford, 156
Tynemouth, 242

Udimore, 21

Veryan, 48

Waldron, 21
Walsall, 20
Walsh, 105
Walsingham, 247
Walsoken, 156
Walton-on-the-Hill, 74, 155
Wareham, 155
Warlingworth, 157
Watchet, 15
Waterford, 152
Well, 31
Wellcombe, 171
Wellingborough, 209
Wellington, 71
Wellow, 179
Wells, 120, 149, 210, 224
Wem, 116
Wendover, 20
Wenlock, 15
Wensley, 109
Westmeon, 35
Westminster, 29, 95, 103, 126, 137, 174, 209, 211, 233, 238, 241, 249
West Walton, 44
Whaplode, 133
Whitburn, 200
Whitehaven, 187

Whitherne, 29
Wickhampton, 99
Widdicombe, 110
Wilne, 158
Wilsdon, 200
Wimborne, 152, 210, 229
Winchester, 79, 111, 149, 156, 194
Windsor, 227
Wingfield, 88
Winsterley, 88
Winwick, 20, 24
Withernsea, 37
Witney, 35, 93
Woldingham, 41
Wolsingham, 87
Wolverhampton, 115, 240
Woodbury, 55
Woodplumpton, 76
Worcester, 74, 99, 119, 227, 246
Worfield, 21
Worsted, 111, 156, 158
Wrexham, 19, 50

Yarmouth, 33, 38, 40
York, 40, 50, 70, 149, 150, 158, 167, 204, 214, 224, 231, 241
Youghal, 84

Zennor, 106

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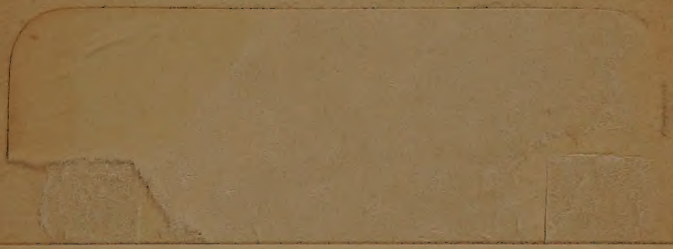

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Tyack, George Smith.

Lore and legend of the English church, by the Rev. Geo. S Tyack, B. A. London, W. Andrews & co., 1899.

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